SAINT BENEDICT

AN HISTORICAL DISCOURSE ON HIS LIFE

S.t Benedict

after Mazzaroppi

F. Jenkins. Heliog. Paris

SAINT BENEDICT

AN HISTORICAL DISCOURSE ON HIS LIFE

BY THE

RIGHT REV. ABBOT TOSTI

OF THE BENEDICTINE CASSINESE CONGREGATION

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN
WITH THE AUTHOR'S SPECIAL PERMISSION
BY THE

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OF ST MICHAEL'S PRIORY, HEREFORD

WITH A PREFACE
BY THE

RIGHT REV. JOHN CUTHBERT HEDLEY, O.S.B.

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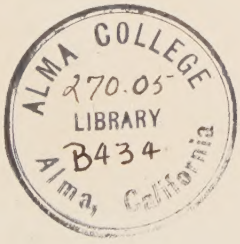

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PREFACE.

THIS translation of Abbot Tosti's "History of St Benedict," executed with great faithfulness and literary success by one of the Fathers of St Michael's Cathedral Priory, near Hereford, will no doubt be welcomed by a large circle, even outside the Benedictine family itself. I am not sure, however, that the name of the writer is by any means so well known in English-speaking countries as, on many accounts, it deserves to be. In Italy, and also in France, the reputation of Tosti is widely spread. He is an old man now; but his long life has been spent among the memories and the archives of Italy and of his own Order, and the fruits of his labour and research are on record, in the shape of some twenty volumes of published works. He has told the story of his own great Abbey of Monte Cassino, of Pope Boniface VIII., of the Lombard League, and of the Council of Constance, in pages which are not only stamped with that accuracy and conscientious telling of the truth that history demands, but are marked by a lofty dignity of style and a distinction of thought such as we find in writers whom the world has accepted in classics. His "Prolegomeni" to the study of Church History is worthy to rank with Bossnet's "Introduction." He has been intimate with most of the scholars of his generation from De Rossi to Mr Gladstone, and there are few of the interesting questions of the day on which he has not had a word to say.[1]

[1] The following is a fairly complete list of Abbot Tosti's published works:—

1. Storia della Badia di Monte Cassino, ... 4 vols.
2. Storia di Bonifazio VIII. e de'suoitempi, ... 2 ,,
3. Storia della Lega Lombarda, ... 1 ,,
4. Storia di Abelardo e de'suoi tempi, ... 1 ,,
5. Storia del Concilio di Costanza, ... 2 ,,

There has been no modern "Life of St Benedict" until Abbot Tosti wrote. The reason for this is not far to seek. St Benedict's Life was written once for all by St Gregory the Great. That Second Book of the Dialogues which is consecrated to the Holy Patriarch—a narrative so ample, so simple, so authentic, and so devout—has seemed to suffice both for history and for devotion. Few would wish to re-write what the greatest of the Popes had given to the world. Among the Benedictine Chroniclers there are abridgments and commentaries. Mabillon and Montalembert, each in his distinctive manner, have placed in the forefront of their Annals the picture of the great Founder. We find, among the unwearied Maurists, one at least who has amplified and watered down, in seventeenth century French, the phrases of the original life.[1] But no one, so far, had described that wonderful career in the literary and philosophic language of the present day. This has been Abbot Tosti's task.

Abbot Tosti's "Life of St Benedict" is essentially the work of a modern writer. There are Saints' lives which are as ancient in style as the Saints themselves. There are writers who never seem to recognise that even the ground which a Saint trod has any existence at the present day. Every biography of a remarkable man should touch upon his relations with the past and the future, and with the environment of his own career. The terms, the phrases, and the ideas of a bygone century have generally lost their force and their significance for readers of our own day, and a skilful

6. Storia dell' Origine del Schisma Greco, ... 2 vols.
7. La Contessa Matilda e i Romani Pontefici, ... 1 ,,
8. Prolegomeni alla Storia della Chiesa, ... 2 ,,
9. Saltieri, ... 1 ,,
10. Il veggente del secolo XIX., ... 1 ,,
11. Torquato Tasso e i Benedettini Cassinesi, ... 1 ,,

Besides various shorter pieces, and this "Life of St Benedict."

[1] I refer to "La Vie du grand S. Benoist, Patriarche des Moines de l' Occident, ses vertus, ses maximes, les excellences de sa Regle, et un abrégé des grands hommes de son Ordre. Par le Père Dom. BERNARD PLANCHETTE, Moine Bénédictin de la Congregation de S. Maur. A Paris, chez Jean Billaine, rue Sainct Jacques, MDCLII."

use of juxta-position and comparison with the actual thoughts of the existing generation is a most interesting and useful commentary on a narrative which otherwise might lose the half of its meaning. This is all the more emphatically true of a history like that of St Benedict; the history of the beginnings of an epoch, and of a man who in his acts and in his recorded words laid foundations in Christian Europe which all the storms and revolutions of a dozen centuries have not been able to destroy or efface.

The modern historian is expected, in the first place, to be a sound and cautious critic. It is not necessary at this day to speak of Abbot Tosti's relation to historical criticism. He has searched through too many libraries, scrutinised too many ancient *codices*, and run the gauntlet of too many candid friends to be easily taken in or to admit as certain anything that is spurious or doubtful. The original sources of the history of St Benedict are happily neither obscure nor disputable. We have, first of all, the narrative of St Gregory the Great. St Gregory wrote many years after the holy patriarch's death; but Abbot Tosti considers that he may well be looked upon as a contemporary historian, seeing that he had the facts he relates from four witnesses who had been St Benedict's disciples—one of them, indeed, his successor in the government of Monte Cassino. Next, there is Mark, the monk and poet, who came to the monastery during St Benedict's lifetime, and who has left sixty or seventy elegiac verses in which he mentions one or two circumstances not found in St Gregory. These verses, after a careful collation of Cassinese MSS., Abbot Tosti has printed in his Appendix. The "Life of St Maurus," by Faustus, is another contemporary record. Unfortunately, it has not escaped interpolation. The same is to be said of the "Life of St Placidus," by Gordianus. But Abbot Tosti thinks that it is easy, in these two narratives, to detect the anachronisms. In any case, the interpolations themselves are from a very ancient hand, and to an experienced reader, yield many precious fragments

of true history. These sources of Benedictine information have all been discussed at great length and with abundant learning by such writers as Angelo della Noce, Abbot of Monte Cassino, Dom Hæften in his "Disquisitiones," and Dom Mabillon in his great work, the "Annales Benedictini." Abbot Tosti does not profess to reproduce or again to go through the labours of these competent critics. But we have, in this volume, the fruit of an independent examination of these and other commentators, and of the sources themselves. It is pleasing to read a saint's life in which the interest is sustained, not by apocryphal legends or fanciful conjectures, but by the text of responsible and contemporary writers, illuminated by the happy intuitions of ripe learning and solicitous affection. With the great library of the Arch-Abbey at hand, the writer has verified ancient documents afresh, and discovered new illustrations, and with his eye upon the modern press, he has utilised all that has been written on Benedictine matters from Montalembert to the recent labours of Cardinal Bartolini and of the Basilian Abbot of Grotta-ferrata, D. Giuseppe Cozza-Luzi.

Another gift which a writer of saints' lives in these days must possess is that of interesting the reader in the scenes and localities of the story. There are three spots which are interwoven with the history of St Benedict—Rome, Subiaco, and Monte Cassino. Few visitors to Rome are even acquainted with the little church in the Trastevere, called "S. Benedetto *in Piscinula*," and fewer still know how much evidence there is to connect it with the early years of the Saint. Of this church, and of the chamber within it (said to be St Benedict's own room), as well as of the ancient image of Our Lady found on one of the walls, we have a careful description and a very complete history. The events of the Saint's flight from Rome, and his sojourn in the *Sacro Speco* at Subiaco, are narrated with the vividness natural in one who is acquainted with every detail of the localities named. There is no attempt at fine writing; but I may point to the sketch of the scenery around the holy

cave as an instance of that power of evoking the ideal from things inanimate, of which we find evidence in so much of Tosti's writing—

"Corre ai suoi piedi, in fondo alla valle, il fiume Aniene. Il suo corso era un monito della fugacità della nostra vita; il fragore continuo delle sue acque un *memento homo* dell' eternita . . . Guarda il Mezzodì. . . . È una paurosa solitudine, che cessa ogni alito di umano consorzio, selvaggia, avara di quella consolazione di cui sogliono irrigare l'aridità del umano spirito le naturali bellezze. . . . Il silenzio delle cose del mondo stampa su quelle rupi come un orma di virginità preistorica. . . . Sempre e dovunque Iddio si adora, ma solo tra quelle rupi Iddio si sente."[1]

It is upon Monte Cassino, however, that the author bestows the greatest care. His volumes on the history of the great Abbey have been before the world many years, and it is natural that he should know by heart all its stones and their story. It would appear probable that what was the ancient Roman municipium of "Casinum" belonged in the sixth century to the senator Tertullus, the father of the monk St Placidus, and was given by him to St Benedict, when the holy Patriarch had to leave Subiaco for good. The town was at the foot of the mountain (it is now called San Germano), and in the second half of the sixth century it was deserted and in ruins. For Casinum stood on the natural high road between Rome and Naples, and over and over again Goths and Vandals, and many a host before and after their time, have swept past the foot of the frowning rocks towards the valley of the Volturno and the delights of Capua. and so to Naples and the sea. St Benedict was first sheltered in Casinum itself, perhaps in one of those great Roman buildings which must have been standing, although in ruins, at the time when the Saint and his few companions arrived. But the great Monastery was to rise, not on the slopes, but at the very top of the lofty height, crowned with woods, which dominated the city and the plain. High up among the groves were plainly to be seen the acropolis of a city far

[1] Vita di S. Benedetto, p. 54 (English translation, pp. 36-7).

older than Casinum, and cyclopean walls and towers which proved that a warlike people had there set up one of those mountain fortresses, the remains of which can still be seen on many similar heights of Latium and Campania. Here, amid the groves and the formidable monuments of a bygone age, the country people, whom war and misery had robbed of their pastors, had reverted to the Paganism of their ancestors, and set up temples to Venus, Apollo, and Jove. St Benedict encamped within the very circle of the old pelasgic walls. The tower in which he took up his abode—where he wrote the Holy Rule, and where he had his great vision—is still there; that is to say, the lower part of the existing tower is identical with the ancient one. Through that venerable archway have passed more than forty generations. Monks, soldiers, princes, learned clerks, great prelates, illustrious Popes—a procession typical of all that has been best and greatest in European history—have gone up through there to the Church and the cloisters which afterwards rose over the tomb of St Benedict. Every Benedictine and every lover of the monastic Order will read with the deepest interest the story, as told by Abbot Tosti, of the ground whereon the great Abbey stands.

It is extremely interesting, especially to those who from youth have been acquainted with the text of St Gregory's "Life," to follow such a writer as Tosti—a modern, critical, hard-headed scholar—in his treatment of the simple and downright narrative which has handed down to all generations the portrait of St Benedict. St Gregory wrote much more for edification than for the sake of history. In a description of the "Dialogues," which he gives in one of his Letters, we read that he intended to relate "the miracles" of certain holy persons of Italy. At the same time, it is certain that he took great pains to verify his facts. He tells us that what he relates he had learnt "from the testimony of venerable men." He states that, in order to give confidence to his readers, he will "always set down the names of those who were his informants"; and it adds a touch of genuine-

ness when he goes on to say that he has not in every instance transcribed the exact words of his witnesses, because in many cases their "rusticity" would not have adapted itself to the style of his work.[1] We can only regret that he did not do it. But he was writing a book of spiritual edification, and was not thinking of those unspiritual philologists and archæologists of the future who would have given red gold for every "rustic" word of a Campanian peasant of the sixth century. Still, it is not difficult to recognise scores of passages in which the "rusticity" has been very thinly disguised; for the "Dialogues" are a perfect treasure house of popular speech and usage. We see the people in their daily lives—their dwellings, clothing, and food; their buying and selling; the rich man's horses and the poor woman's poultry (with the fox who comes to steal it); quaint fashions of speech, from the old man of Umbria, who says of St Fortunatus, in Terentian phrase, "Novi, et bene novi," to the very characteristic adjectives and adverbs of St Gregory himself.

The Second Book of the Dialogues, which is wholly dedicated to the history of St Benedict, was evidently compiled with special care. We can recognise this, not merely from the pains which the holy doctor takes to give the names and description of his four principal informants, but from the minute details, and the local and personal indications with which the narrative abounds. The mere historian may be inclined to regret the space that is occupied with miracles. But in reality, even from the historian's point of view, there is little need to do so. There are two ways of relating a miracle. One is to set down the miraculous fact and surround it with a nimbus of piety. The other is to tell the whole story from the beginning, just as if one had been present when it happened. I have nothing to say against the first of these fashions, of which you may find examples in nearly every "life" of a saint, and which has its uses. But it is not the fashion of St Gregory.

[1] Dialogorum, Prooemium.

There never was a better story-teller. He has just those qualities of actuality, minute detail, and direct phrasing which go to make up a good story. I feel inclined to quote one of the many which are to be found in the Dialogues. This is a story of a pet bear. St Gregory begins by saying where it happened. He then introduces two holy men, Eutychius and Florentius, who are living together. Eutychius goes away to be abbot of a neighbouring monastery, and Florentius is left in sole charge of the little hermitage where they had dwelt together. Feeling the solitude of his position, the good Florentius one day prostrates himself in his little oratory, and prays to God to send him "something" to cheer him up. Rising and going out of the chapel, what does he find standing at the door but a bear! —a bear, bowing his shaggy head, and showing, as well as a bear can, that he means to be friendly. The solitary recognises at once that this is the answer of Divine Providence. Straightway the bear enters upon the hermit's service. There are a few sheep belonging to the hermitage, and the bear is ordered to shepherd them. This he does with the greatest success, never once offering to eat any of them, but taking them out to pasture and bringing them back at the appointed time, with such exactness that, when Florentius tells him it is a fasting day, he does not marshal them homewards at noon, which is the usual hour, but waits till three o'clock before he comes for his well-earned meal. This goes on quietly and happily for some time, and the fame of it is noised abroad. But, alas, for the wickedness of the human heart! There are some men who are unable to let other people alone—and on this occasion we are told that it is envy which stirs their hearts; envy, mark you, that Florentius should be the subject of such a wonderful providence, and that Eutychius, the abbot of these mean-hearted disciples, should, so far, be utterly undistinguished by sign or portent. So four of them—it would seem to have taken four to do it—lie in wait for the poor beast, and kill him. That day the bear comes not

back to the hermitage, and Florentius, not without many apprehensions as to what has happened to him whom in his simplicity he calls his brother, waits for him in vain till the hour of vespers and the night. At break of day he goes out to seek him and the flock; and he finds his dead body. He soon discovers who it is that has done the deed; and whilst he cannot restrain his tears and sorrow, he rather laments the malice of the monks than his own loss. His old friend Eutychius sends for him, and attempts to offer consolation; but the grief of Florentius is great—and then it is that, like a prophet of old, he curses the aggressors; wishing that God, by a temporal punishment, may mark the malice of those "who killed my bear, that never did them any harm." God justly and mercifully showed His anger with the four disciples by striking them with leprosy, thus turning their hearts back to Himself. But Eutychius was horror-struck. It seemed to him he was the murderer of his brethren; and to his dying day he wept that he had been heard. And this, says St Gregory, was doubtless permitted by Almighty God in order that this holy, but most simple, man might learn how wrong it was, even in his grief, to hurl the spear of malediction.

This story is not taken from the life of St Benedict, but from the third book of the Dialogues. But it illustrates St Gregory's style. In his history of the Patriarch of monks, he deals largely in his miracles. But he touches upon a hundred matters, the description, or introduction, of which gives life to the narrative, and makes us feel we are dealing with a man who could use his eyes and his ears; who was not inditing a romance or embroidering, like some Sir Thomas Malorie, the faded remnants of old-world tales. The sinister figure of Totila appears here and there in the story, as it does throughout all the dialogues; and that name evokes associations which furnish the reader with that background of Italian history which is required in order to appreciate the significance of St Benedict. We have Totila and his Goths; we have the great buildings of the

old Romans; we have a country wasted and unproductive, where the peasants can hardly subsist; we have the mountains, the mountain streams, the marshy flats of the country as they affect the life and work of the people. We have a people falling back, to some extent, into idolatry—and yet we see churches, priests, and clerics. There are holy bishops, ruling ancient sees, like Capua, monks—good, bad, and indifferent—hermits, and religious women. These details have enabled Abbot Tosti, with the practised eye of the modern historian, to present St Benedict in his historical setting, and to seize the real meaning of the incidents of which he is the central figure.

No little interest will be aroused to see how a critic like Tosti has treated the miraculous element in this life of a saint. It need not be said that he takes the simple and plain course which every enlightened Catholic may be expected to take. He says:—

"In this commentary of mine on the life of St Benedict, the reader will find miracles, prophecies, and visions of a man who feels in the depths of his soul a divine mission to gather together, and to form those called by God to the spiritual combat of evangelical counsel; those who take up the self-denial of the Cross to follow Christ; who, like the primitive disciples, preach to the Church the dogma of renunciation and of charity. These things I shall relate, on the one hand, without being afraid of the sneers of those who do not believe in the things of the Spirit, and, on the other, with due obedience to the Church, to whom alone it belongs to decide in questions of the supernatural."[1]

And towards the end of the book he has some interesting remarks on the reason why in those times there were so many miracles.[2] A miracle, he says, is a supernatural fact, and those who perform them are only the instruments of God, who alone judges of the fitness of time and place. But miracles are usually granted for the building up of the Church. Now, what the Gentiles were in the economy of Apostolic miracles, that the Barbarians were to men like St Benedict, whose office it was to make them citizens of the City of God. The Barbarians had no history and no philosophy, and they were men of the sword. But they were

[1] Vita, p. 3. [2] Vita, p. 233. Translation, p. 154.

young, and had the capacity of Faith, and they bent their head before the combined force of evangelical example and supernatural power.

Such views as these may be recommended to shallow minds, who, in the miraculous incidents of a saint's life, can only see credulity and superstition. The hard and immovable obstinacy which makes non-Catholics refuse to believe that God in any instance whatsoever interferes with His own laws, is really only one manifestation of the practical disbelief in a living God, which is so widely found among cultivated Protestants. But if they could once reject an attitude so un-Christian and so unscriptural, they would find in the circumstances of different epochs the grounds of philosophical explanation for many of those outbursts of supernatural power of which history speaks. It will be remembered that the poor enthusiastic young parson in *Robert Elsmere*, who devotes himself to the critical study of St Gregory of Tours, has his faith upset by the reflection that, as the miracles of Gregory's History are undoubtedly the merest idle tales, it probably follows that the Gospel narrative is no better. St Gregory of Tours died about ten years before St Gregory the Great, and the school of the late T. H. Green would, without hesitation, apply equally to both saints the dictum that "Miracles do not happen." With such a school no man can argue; it is refreshing to turn from unreasonable dogmatism of this sort to the enlightened views of a thoughtful and philosophic believer.[1]

It would not be possible to touch upon all the interesting and more or less novel contributions which this book makes

[1] The following words of M. Fustel de Coulanges, in his volume entitled *La Monarchie Française*, show the kind of value attached to ancient lives of Saints by the rationalistic school of historians. "I may doubt that a Saint wrought a miracle in order to save a criminal condemned to death, but I am assured by the narrative that sentence of death was pronounced, and I accept as correct the procedure which is there described. On these points the author was bound to be accurate, otherwise his contemporaries would not have believed his miracle. It is thus that the lives of the Saints instruct us respecting the manners of men, the general character of the life of their times, the judicial practices, administration, and government" (p. 12).

to the history of St Benedict. One of the most noticeable is the writer's theory as to the age at which the youthful Saint left the temptations of Rome for the solitudes of Subiaco. Most writers have taken it for granted that St Benedict was at that time not more than eleven or twelve. St Gregory in several places calls him *puer*, and says that when he fled from his father's house he was as unprovided with human learning as he was filled with heavenly wisdom. Abbot Tosti, however, thinks it certain that he was twenty at least, that he was really well instructed in all that a boy usually learns, and that he only sacrificed that higher or "university" education which a youth of his rank would have naturally gone on to acquire. One argument, on which the writer hardly dwells with sufficient emphasis, is found in the Greek translation of the "Dialogues," which we owe to Pope Zachary. It is curious, to say the least, that the Greek declines to translate, and entirely omits, the word *puer*, which occurs twice in the history of the flight, and that in the subsequent history of the temptation, the word *aliquando* is deliberately altered into ἐν τῷ καιρῷ της νεοτητῆς αὐτοῦ, "in the time of his adolescence." In numerous other passages of the Dialogues the constantly-recurring word *puer* is uniformly rendered by πάις and νήπιος. This would seem to show that Pope Zachary, writing with the Roman traditions fresh around him, had felt the difficulty of making the Saint so young, and had decided to alter the phraseology of St Gregory. That St Benedict, in his inspired flight, was accompanied by his "nurse," need not make any difficulty. Cyrilla was what we should rather call his "foster-mother," and there is abundant historical evidence that a woman of this kind retained an honoured position in a Roman family long after the children had grown into men and women.

A writer like the historian of *Monte Cassino* and the author of the *Prolegomeni alla storia della Chiesa* could not complete a book on such a fertile theme as St Benedict without giving utterance to much pregnant wisdom and philosophic thought. In a Prologue which is full of modern

ideas, and the extremely idiomatic Italian of which is far from easy to render in an illogical language like our own, Don Tosti tells us that he had long been desirous to honour his holy father and to "draw him out of the imprisonment of legend." To him St Benedict is the divinely-appointed man of God who has been mainly instrumental in impressing upon European Christendom the principle of the Evangelical Counsels. To have merely written the life of the Saint of Subiaco would not have been to write history. As Abbot Tosti expresses it, in characteristic phrase, "L'azione morale del' nomo, racchiusa nei confini della propria individualità, non è materia di storia." History only begins when you get outside of personal details, and compare them with the family, the state, the Church, and civil society. A time was sure to come in the decrees of God when European society had to be made thoroughly Christian by the evangelical counsels—by the impress of the Cross upon civil institutions and the public life of nations. That time arrived, as we can see now, about the end of the sixth century. Then there was the need of a man; and not only of a man, but of a practical type which could be imitated and reproduced in the life of a people. The man was the monk Benedict; the practical exemplar was the monastic institution. This is the reason why Don Tosti calls his book "an historical discourse." You have in its pages all the "legend" of Benedict of Nursia, but that legend is "questioned" and set forth with all the power of an accomplished historian. It was not without the disposition of Providence that St Benedict was a Roman. Only Roman force and Roman prerogative could impose upon the tribes of the Barbarians the Christianising yoke of Jesus Christ. In St Benedict there was the ancient Roman character—the breadth, the energy, and the organising force which in former days had created the Empire. In him there was also, what was of greater importance, the conviction that every movement that was to endure must have its root

in Rome. These words, which so often occur in his Rule, "sicut Romana psallit Ecclesia," although they refer only to liturgical matters, are an index of the feeling which bound him to Rome; and the movement which, undoubtedly, after his death, imposed his Rule on the whole monasticism of Italy, and which would have been impossible without the initiative of the Roman See, is sufficient to prove how intimate must have been his own connection with the centre of unity. In Rome, as Don Tosti once more reminds us in an eloquent passage, the traditions of St Anthony and of the Egyptian deserts were well known through the writings of St Athanasius. In Rome St Basil's great monastic treatises were passed from hand to hand. St Basil, whom St Benedict honours as his "father," and the union between Rome and Monte Cassino, is seen most strikingly in the fact that when the Abbey was destroyed by the Lombards, only a generation after the holy Patriarch's body had been laid there to rest, the Cassinese monks fled nowhere but to Rome, where they found a refuge in the shadow of the Lateran basilica for more than a hundred years.

Don Tosti, as I have said, treats such matters as these, extending his gaze over the whole field of European history, and scanning from the rocky heights of Monte Cassino, even as St Benedict did in his vision, the "whole world spread out."

To the English race, and to the English Benedictine Congregation in particular, he has many words of exhortation and encouragement. He quotes the words written in the guest-book of the Abbey by John Henry Newman in 1846—that fervent invocation of the saints of the holy mountain to give help to England now as in the days gone by. He warns the Anglo-Benedictines that the day is coming when St Benedict will knock at their door, and putting into their hand the Cross which St Augustine brought from the Cœlian hill, will bid them carry it back, taking their countrymen with them, to the Vatican, where alone is the centre of unity. He gives a brief, but very spirited description of the work of the monks in England and

also in Germany,[1] and he ends the volume with a suggestion rather than a prophesy as to the future of the Order.

To prophesy is not given to every man. The world is very different now from what it was in the sixth century. Perhaps the less a monk thinks about converting the world and the more he thinks about converting himself, the more likely will it be that the world will be converted. This is what writers like Abbot Tosti feel so deeply. If Monasticism in our own day is truly a "practical type and pattern" of the evangelical counsels, then it is likely to be as potent as ever it was. There is a very instructive passage in a recently published book—the life of Mother Rose Columba Adams, a Dominican nun of the Stone Congregation. When she and her companions went out to Adelaide, it was with the purpose of taking the administration of a hospital. This was found impracticable. Then the question arose, "What were they to do?" "Humanly speaking, we are *not* the religious for this place. Less of religious life and more freedom of action is what seems to be required" (p. 249). But she was mistaken. The local clergy, and the Bishop himself, united in saying, that if they only "took care of their chapel and said their office, they would be doing a great work for God." They came before long to see this very plainly themselves. The sanctification of a rough, money-making, hard-headed, wide-awake colony was to be best promoted, not by hospitals or by visiting the sick, or even by schools, but by seclusion, the Divine Office, and the perpetual Adoration. And this is actually the life they have taken up.

At the same time, to a would-be prophet, there are not wanting signs of the times. The most striking of these is the strong interest shown in the Order by the reigning sovereign Pontiff. The great restoration of Monte Cassino, which was celebrated by the centennial festival in 1880, was not honoured by the personal presence of the Pope, for reasons that every one knows. But he was there, as Tosti

[1] I am not sure that our brethren of Ireland will thank him for making St Kilian an "Anglo-Saxon" (p. 312).

points out, in spirit and by his benediction. The Benedictine international college of St Anselm, on the Aventine, is one of the most munificent benefactions that the Holy See has ever bestowed upon any religious Order.

Meanwhile, all readers may learn from this volume on the great St Benedict things old and things new. He will find the ancient story and will be interested in the modern ideas. It is well that such an enterprise should have been undertaken, and it is doubly satisfactory that it should have been accomplished by Don Luigi Tosti. Mabillon, in excusing himself for his temerity in attempting to write the Benedictine Annals, says: "In Sanctorum gloriam aliquid audendum est!"—a little audacity is excusable when it is a question of honouring the Saints. There was no need to make any such apology; and neither is there in the present instance. All those qualities which the great Maurist would fain see in the history of a Saint—that "delectus," that "splendor," that "majestas"—are conspicuous in this masterpiece of the illustrious Cassinese. To the Christian world, and to Italy above all, it is salutary and refreshing to stand in the presence of so true and living a portrait of the Patriarch of Western monasticism. To all thoughtful and cultured minds, of our own country as well as of other nations, there are many lessons to learn from the Benedictine Rule—here so skilfully set forth—and the Benedictine influence. In our own land, to speak of no others, there is hardly a town, a fertile plain, or a river-valley which does not still retain the odour of the Benedictine name and the traces of monastic achievement. This book may serve to light up with intelligence and comprehension the ruined precincts and the crumbling cloisters, and may teach a forgetful generation that strong ideas lived once on a time where all seems now so lifeless and so still.

JOHN CUTHBERT HEDLEY, O.S.B.,
Bishop of Newport.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel,
1896.

PROLOGUE.

1. Scope of this book—2. The evangelical ideal of the human individual—3. This ideal in civil society, evangelized by the monks—4. How monachism came from the East into the West—5. St Benedict makes it Roman, and is the chosen Apostle of the Gospel—6. Why St Benedict was the first scribe of the Church and archivist of pagan wisdom—7. The historical cycle of his Order.

1. BEFORE entering on the narrative of the life of St Benedict, it is well that the reader should know why it is written. In these times when historical research is pursued with such ardour and subtle criticism, no document is found in the libraries of ancient manuscripts which adds anything to the knowledge of our subject. St Benedict is always the same saint of St Gregory's *legend*[1]; penitent and reprover of monks on Subiaco, and legislator of western monachism on Monte Cassino. Considered in his supernatural relations to God on account of his own sanctification and that of others, his deeds do not go beyond the confines of his own monastery; for chronicle and legend, which is a liturgical chronicle, tell us little of the relations which the men of old time had with their age, and of the moral heritage which they left to the great work of human progress. The chronicle, when interrogated, tells us only that such men lived. But these men, drawn forth from obscurity, and placed

[1] The word *legend* is not here used to signify that kind of writing which relates superstitious fables, but the account of the lives of the saints, approved by the Church and read by the faithful in the Sacred Offices. Hence I have defined it a Liturgical Chronicle, which Du Cange more clearly explains: "Legenda, Legendarius, Liber Acta Sanctorum per anni totius circulum digesta continens, sic dictus, quia certis diebus *legenda* in Ecclesia et in sacris synaxibus designabantur a moderatore chori."

under the light of reason and criticism, tell us something of their life and prove to us, by their high moral deeds, the right they have to the gratitude of their fellow-men, and the immortality of their name. Thus the record of the chronicle is changed into the science of history.

2. Accustomed as I have been for long years to the contemplation of the virtues of St Benedict, and consoled by the filial love which I bear to him, I have always desired to honour him by drawing him out from the hiddenness of legend; for the crown which the faith of wise saints has placed upon his head is made twofold by the addition of that which the judgment of history awards to the benefactors of humanity. But my intellect has never had nerve for this, nor has my knowledge been sufficient for so high a task. Nevertheless, when the wish bursts forth from the depths of feeling, feeble effort, if it does not succeed in attaining to that object, will often be sufficient to inflame others more learned with the desire of accomplishing it. My purpose, then, in writing this book is clear. Let my readers not lift their eyes too high, but rather let them take a lower gaze, and see me walking between the lofty heights of history and the humble paths of chronicle, with modesty and recollection,

Come i frati minor vanno per via.[1]

Therefore, in this discourse on the Life of St Benedict, the reader will find the miracles, the prophecies, the visions of a man, who feels in the depths of his soul a divine mission to gather together and to train those who are called by God to the spiritual palestra of the evangelical counsels; those who willingly submit to the sacrifice of the Cross to follow Christ; those who, imitators of His first disciples, preach in the Church the dogma of abnegation and charity. I shall give my narrative with no feeling of timidity, for fear of the jeers of those who do not believe in spiritual things, nor in any spirit of disobedience to the Church, to whom it belongs to define what is above nature.

[1] Dante, "Inf.," xxiii.

He will find here touched upon the beneficial relations of Benedictine asceticism with civil society, but not treated of in detail, as volumes would be required for this. However, simple hints will be enough for the historical scholar to indicate the idea of the writer. Under these relations, the believer and the unbeliever may meet, as it were, on the same field without anger of party. For besides belief and non-belief there is also sentiment, which is the same in the believer and the unbeliever, just as the heritage of sorrow is common — that terrible problem which is not solved by algebraical formulas nor deadened by the drugs of chemistry. One cannot always be philosophising. To fatigue of body succeeds the inertia of repose ; to that of the mind, the peace of faith. Faith is the pillow on which we may place the weary head during the vigils of grief ; and the narrative of saintly lives, which appear to us, when we are haughty with the boldness of youth and learning, like a folly, lulls us gently to sleep in those wakeful hours, and makes us *feel* what in our waking moments we did not wish to believe. By this union the miracles and prophecies of an ascetic, who is a benefactor to humanity, not being able to make way where reason rules, will be able to do so through the feelings, and will leave there a secret seed of the supernatural, by which the miracles were produced. Thus all parties will end in wishing success to my "St Benedict," which is the aim of these humble pages.

3. There are two ways presented to believers for attaining eternal salvation, one of the precepts, the other of the counsels. By the first way, which is absolutely necessary, all those proceed, who, by faith and baptism, submit their minds to the teaching of the Apostles. By the second, only the perfect walk, by free choice and the strength of divine grace, being not only obedient to the word of Christ, but imitating Him in the redeeming act of the sacrifice of Himself. I call them perfect, because they arrive at this imitation by the virtue of charity, in which all virtues have their origin and perfection. As it was by charity alone that Christ sacrificed

Himself and offered Himself to death, and that the death of the Cross, so is it by this same virtue alone that those who follow Him in the observance of the evangelical counsels, accomplish in themselves the sacrifice of Intellect, Will, and Heart, signified by the symbol of the Cross. "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me."[1] Zaccheus followed Him at the words, *Come down;* and Levi followed Him at the words, *Follow thou Me:* so did also all the Apostles and the faithful in the beginning of the Church. Therefore following Christ, and Christ Crucified, is the Ideal of the Gospel.

And as by this Ideal Christ has redeemed the human race from the slavery of sin, so have the Apostles, the preachers of the Gospel, redeemed, by this same Ideal, humanity in each individual. And it came to pass that the Christian believer, having a rational personality, which is the source of human actions, was made into a new man by his works; his life was hidden, as St Paul says,[2] with Christ in God, and the fruit of his life was a new civilisation, which we call Christian.

The moral action of man, confined within the limits of his own individuality, is not the matter of history. History is produced when, passing beyond those limits, the moral action of man expands and mingles with the relations of the family, of the state, and of the nation. This expansion did not happen at once, as soon as the psychological act of faith and the symbolical cleansing of baptism were accomplished. It was slow and progressive; men became Christians at once, but the production of Christian Civil Society was more gradual. As in the case of the Individual, so Christian Society must be the outcome of the same Evangelical Ideal, which must ordinate its parts and infuse into it a life-giving spirit and a new principle of immortality to govern its complex action. Therefore when the plenitude of time had come, in which the redeeming power of Christ was to

[1] St Matt. xvi. 24.

[2] "Your life is hid with Christ in God."—Col. iii. 3.

become incarnate, so to say, in Civil Society, the followers of the Crucified Christ were to be the Evangelizers of this new social economy. But when believers gathered together in civil fellowship, and had to be evangelized afresh, because they were to compose a Christian Civil Society, it was necessary to lead them on to the consequences derivable from the Christian principle, for the family as well as the state were to become like their members.

A practical and social type must be found, therefore, for imitation. This was the monastic life, the most lucid manifestation of the Evangelical Ideal, and the most intelligible to minds already imbued with the knowledge of the Precepts. And here let the reader observe, that the action of the Apostles was complete, both in relation to man in his separate individuality, and in relation to the moral being of Society. The Apostles were mortal, but the power of their Apostolate was immortal amid all the contingencies of men and times. Their power passed into the hands of the Apostolic Church, which used it, at its will, through the chosen Saints of God, for the continuous diffusion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Among those chosen saints was St Benedict, whom I call an Apostle, and his work a Social Apostolate.

To establish such an intimate relation between Christian Society and a few contemplative ascetics is, to one without the aid of faith, an absurdity like the propagation of the Gospel appears to be, which renewed the face of the earth by a few poor, illiterate, despised fishermen. But that absurdity is a fact which neither criticism nor derision can cancel from the book of History. When and why that Apostolate was exercised I shall, by passing but clear touches, make the reader understand.

4. If the Ideal of the Gospel is Christ Crucified, it is an Ideal which will never perish. This is the torch of spiritual illumination which the Apostles first took in their hands. But they were only mortal men. At their death it passed into the hands of the Church, which is long-lived as time

itself. She had no infancy : she was born mature and perfect in knowledge and virtue. It was not, then, through want of intellect and will that she stood waiting the fitness of times and men, in order to entrust that Ideal to the chosen one of God, in order that he might show it forth amid the nations by his own example. That was not the delay of impotence, but a waiting of what St Paul calls the *plenitudo temporis*—the fulness of time and fitness of means—which God, though Omnipotent, loves in His extrinsic works for the sake of harmony and beauty; for God is Beauty. The Church, therefore, waited till the decline of the fifth century, when St Benedict was born.

During that time of waiting, the Church, although espoused to Christ in the laver of His blood, was not yet espoused by the exchange of her own blood, shed by the white-robed army of Martyrs. The Catacombs were the Gethsemani of the Church; in their depths was the chalice of three hundred years of persecution presented to her lips. She drank it, and became the Spouse of the King of Peace. Whilst those Mystical Espousals were taking place in subterranean Rome, there arose in the Rome of the Cæsars, on the Vatican, a throne invisible to the eyes of statesmen, and the Spouse of Christ took her seat upon it.[1]

Her monarchy had not its roots in flesh or blood, like earthly dynasties, but in the whole spiritual body of her members, or of the faithful, to whom the Heavenly Father had revealed the Divinity of His Son. St Peter was the first to confess it, and the first to ascend that throne and seat himself near the Spouse of Jesus Christ, whose place he held upon earth, and where he yet sits in his lawfully-chosen successors, the Supreme Pontiffs. When he descended from his high position to ascend the gibbet of the Cross in imitation of his master, Linus, his first successor, found on that throne, together with the insignia of the Roman Episcopate, the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, the symbol of Spiritual Supremacy over the whole world; and the Church, One,

[1] Ps. xliv. 10.—"The queen stood on thy right hand."

Holy, Catholic, and Apostolical, was also Roman. And by a logical nexus, as the ancient Jerusalem was a symbol of the City of God, and of Paradise, so the Church of Rome symbolizes the Kingdom of Glory, of which Christ is King. Hence it is that the sublimest of our poets has called Christ Roman.[1]

Then the Empire of Augustus and that of the Church united together for one common conquest;—but the fruit of the victory was not common. The victorious Roman legions awoke the barbarians of the North, who then conquered Rome and set it free. The preachers of Christ stirred up humanity, and led it captive into the Eternal City; not captive like the marble kings on the Arch of Constantine, but free, to be transfigured on the Seven Hills in the splendour of the new Christian Civilisation.

As this approached the seat of the key-bearing Pontiffs, there shot forth throughout the desert lands of Egypt and Palestine the first *contemplative fires*, the first monks: Paul, Antony, Macarius, Basil, and a thousand others. The legend of the Fathers of the Desert is the history of how the Evangelical Counsels assumed a stable form in Eastern Monachism. The East is the country of Ideals. These soon grew, and, like seed in a good soil, they become luxuriant in leaves and flowers, but they are slow in the production of fruit, which is their practical incarnation in human life. It is easy for the Oriental to idealise, but to individuate the ideal is difficult. In the West man is more practical than speculative; earnest and more vigorous, he knows how to confine the idea within the possible and the real; and through the habit of ruling, the Roman alone was born a legislator. As a matter of fact, Jesus Christ was born in the East: He conquers, He reigns, He rules the whole universe through the Church in the West, and in the Acropolis of Law, in

[1] Dante. "Purg.," xxxii. 102 :—

Qui sarai tu poco tempo silvano,
E sarai meco senza fine cive
Di quella Roma onde Cristo é Romano.

Rome. This, as a city of rights, is eternal, and is the centre of the Monarchy of Christ in the spiritual form of the Supreme Pontificate.

5. The Oriental evangelical ideal came into Rome in the garb of a monk, when there arrived there in 340, Athanasius, the great defender of the Divinity of the Word, who, fleeing from the rage of the Arians, sought help and counsel at the primatial See of the Bishop of Rome. He, together with his Alexandrian priests, brought the written Life of St Antony and of the monks of the Thebaid. At first that strange mode of life appeared foolish and ridiculous, and no one dared to embrace it for fear of meeting with derision.[1] But in a short time, St Jerome being also in Rome, there were so many monasteries of virgins and so great a number of monks, that, on account of such a multitude of servants of God, that which was before a state of ignominy[2] became one of honour. And at the same time, St Augustin found there many monasteries, in which men, influential by their gravity, prudence, and divine wisdom, presided over others who lived with them in charity, sanctity and the liberty of Christ.[3] As the conversion of peoples to the Precepts of the Gospel was rapid, so also in the West was the following of its Counsels. The first in this country to gather monks together, under fixed statutes, was Eusebius, Bishop of Vercelli.[4] St Ambrose also had a monastery in the suburbs of Milan,[5] and in imitation of him St Augustin, at Tagaste in Africa, lived in a monastery with his young clerics under one rule, after the manner of the Apostles.

It is incredible how quickly from these examples monasteries were multiplied throughout Italy and her islands, through France, Ireland, and Spain.[6] But, to use the expression of Cassian, there were as many rules as cells and monasteries.[7] There was no unity of spiritual training; in

[1] Jerome, Ep. 16. [2] *Ibid.* [3] St Aug., "De Moribus Ecclesiæ," cap. xxxiii.
[4] Ambrose, Ep. 63, *n.* 66. [5] Augustin's "Conf.," Bk. viii. ch. vi.
[6] Possidius, "Life of St Augustin." [7] Irstit., Bk. ii. ch. ii.

some the Tradition of the Elders stood for the rule, in others the Will of the superior. On account of this variety of institutes and the insecurity of life caused by the barbarians, the Evangelical Ideal could not go forth from the monasteries to evangelise the social economy of nations. The man who should know how to control this Ideal by one stable legislation, to invest it with a Latin form, render it fruitful with an intrinsic power of development, which should suit all times and places; angelical, because contemplative; human, because the mistress of the social economy, must be one sent by God to the second apostolate of the Gospel—and such was St Benedict, because ascetic and Roman.

6. In him is seen a period of human history, which is solemnly beautiful, that of the succession of the Christian to the Pagan world. In the fifth century the gods of Homer, left without sacrifice and incense, fell from their pedestals, but the social life of the peoples who had adored them did not fall; it will stand for ever. Paganism, vanquished by the Cross, the subduer of the world, did not surrender itself to the discretion of a proud conqueror; it surrendered to Christ, who was meek and humble of heart. The compact of that surrender was respect for, and the preservation of all that human reason had accomplished in the cultivation of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good; in a word, its Civilisation. By the word compact I do not mean to imply a condition of surrender, for the power of the conqueror was omnipotent, but the impossible extinction of that which never dies—viz., reason and culture. The most precious spoils which adorned the triumph of Christ, the conqueror of sin, were the treasures of human wisdom, written before His coming by legislators, philosophers, historians, poets, and expressed in the monuments of art. All these were placed at the feet of the Church as trophies of the victory gained. To speak only of the West, Rome brought her codex of laws, already engraven on the heart of the barbarians by the sword of conquest; she brought the volumes of her political and literary history, her Livy, Tacitus, Virgil, Horace, and

Cicero ; and showing her monuments, the Campidoglio, the Amphitheatre, the Pantheon, she gave them into the hands of the Church, as to a faithful guardian of a universal patrimony.

I know that the Roman Pontiffs have been accused of a want of fidelity, and have been regarded as destroyers of those monuments, either through too much zeal in wishing to convert them to Christian worship, or through ambition to make of them others more beautiful. But I do not record the faults of men, as I am no Inquisitor; I only remind accusers that many of those monuments, mutilated by the fury of the Barbarians and by civil strifes, are yet standing, because the Roman Pontiffs have given them a sacred character by placing them under the wings of Faith. The *Via Crucis*, when it was in the Flavian Amphitheatre, and the Christian Liturgy in the temple of Agrippa, were, as I think, the balsam of incorruptibility for those monuments of Paganism.

Those artists and those writers were idolators, but the ideal which produced the flowers of beauty and the fruits of virtue in their intellects was the breath of life, the Word ; "all the power of them by the breath of His mouth."[1] After the first sin, the light of human reason was not extinguished ; but it came forth dimmed out of the darkness of iniquity. As the earth, though cursed and bringing forth thorns and brambles, did not cease to produce herbs and corn for the service of man, so reason, though it had sinned, ever brought forth fruits of wisdom, which rendered credible the prophecy of a future Redemption. The Word of God is the star which does not suffer eclipse. If it always shines, it never ceases to render the field of human intellect fertile. The Greek Dionysius, after having reasoned with Plato and Socrates, when he became illuminated by the Word, knew and confessed before the Areopagus, Christ Crucified. For Him the Church gathered the fruit of Pagan civilisation as a sacred thing ; and, by a logical design, St Benedict, the Apostle of the Gospel, was chosen to preserve it.

[1] Ps. xxxiii. 6.

7. During the mediæval darkness the Church committed to his hands the most holy monuments of Divine Revelation and of her Magisterium, the Bible, Canons of Councils, the Fathers; and with these also the monuments of human reason. These inestimable treasures were shut up in the monastic archives, and St Benedict was the first *archivist* of the Holy See: he was the Father of Archives. Therefore in the fifteenth century Sweinheim and Pannartz, the heralds of renascent humanity, who introduced into Italy the discovery of printing, went and knocked at the abode of Benedict, the Abbey of Subiaco, in order to bring into public, by the wonderful artifice of the press, the treasures that were hidden there. Then the monastic Archives were opened and, the claustral veil being drawn aside, there sprang forth living the whole Pagan civilisation, in order to display itself bright and shining on the printed pages of Manuzi and other Italians. Standing by his Archives, St Benedict blessed the espousals of the two civilisations—of Reason and Faith. The *crescite et multiplicamini* of this great High Priest of the Middle Age was not unfruitful. To-day human thought, vivified by Christ, not only fills the earth, *replete terram*, but rules it and transforms it by the tremendous discoveries of science. Formerly princes were invested with the lordship over peoples by the sceptre and the sword; St Benedict invested his monks with the office of preservation by the plough and the pen—agriculture and literature—by which they became husbandmen and the transcribers of ancient wisdom.

The Benedictine historical cycle is all comprised in this double apostolate, to christianize the citizen and to preserve the patrimony of human reason. In this blaze of evangelical splendour does the image of St Benedict, the last of the Romans, stand before the eyes of the historian. Boetius and Symmachus have perished, he alone advances. With the torch of the Gospel Ideal in his hand, he illumines, on one side, the mournful spectacle of the dying empire of Augustus; on the other he irrigates with light a new *Via sacra*, by

which Christ ascends to the shout of the *Io triumphe* of that liberty with which He has redeemed us. Behold the man—behold the light in which I present him to the contemplation of the ascetic, and the erudition of the learned.

The following pages are only a simple historical glance at St Benedict. He who wishes to read them, let him do so without delay, for this book is, perhaps, like so many others, "a leaf that is carried away with the wind."[1]

[1] Job xiii. 25.

ST BENEDICT.

CHAPTER I.

1. Historical sources of the life of St Benedict—2. Who he was—3. He was born in Nursia at the same birth as his sister Scholastica—4. He is sent to school in Rome—5. His home and the church of St Benedict *in Piseinula* 6. Why he wished to leave his home and studies—7. Of Cyrilla his nurse —8. He did not leave Rome devoid of knowledge—9. An intrinsic reason throws light on his age—10. He goes into the country of Efide and works there his first miracle—11. He leaves Cyrilla.

1. ANCIENT authors have left us little information regarding the life of St Benedict. Of contemporary writers we only know of four—Mark, called the Poet; Faustus, in his *Life of Saint Maurus;* Gordianus, author of the *Acts of St Placid, Martyr*, all disciples of St Benedict; and lastly, Pope St Gregory the Great, in the second book of his *Dialogues.* Although the latter wrote many years after the death of the Saint, yet he is to be considered a contemporaneous writer, since he tells us that he had had immediate knowledge of the things he narrated. "But," he says, "the few things that I narrate, I learned from four of his disciples, who told them to me—viz., Constantine, a most reverend man, who succeeded him in the government of the monastery (Cassino); Valentinian, who was, for many years, over the Lateran monastery; Simplicius, who ruled over the Congregation, (Cassinese) third after him; and Honoratus, who is at present presiding over the monastery (Subinco) in which he first dwelt." [1]

[1] "Hujus ego omnia gesta non didici, sed pauca quæ narro, quatuor discipulis illius referentibus, agnovi: Constantino scilicet reverendissimo valde viro, qui ei in regimine monasterii successit; Valentiniano quoque, qui annis multis Lateranensi monasterio præfuit; simplicio quoque, qui Congregationem illius, poste um tertius rexit: Honorato etiam, qui nunc adhuc cellæ ejus, in qua prius conversatus fuerat praerat."—Dialog., lib ii., Praef.

Mark, the poet, who was professed a monk at Monte Cassino, during the lifetime of the Saint, wrote a Latin poem of thirty-three stanzas, in which he narrates the Saint's coming to that mountain and his first deeds. This account contains particulars on which St Gregory does not touch, and which have escaped all those who, at that time, wrote of St Benedict. These verses have, however, become known through the works of Martinengo, Mabillon, Della Noce, and others. I will give them in the appendix to this book, after their being compared anew with the ancient manuscripts of Monte Cassino, and reduced to a better reading.[1]

The two lives of St Maurus and St Placid were both interpolated, the one by Odo, Abbot of Glanfeuil, the other by an unknown hand. But there are in these so many evident anachronisms, that it is not difficult to separate the truth regarding St Benedict from the errors with which the interpolators have disfigured him.

It is not improbable that the disciples of Saint Benedict had committed to writing other facts of his life, which would, perhaps, have come to our knowledge if those monuments had not perished when the abbey of Monte Cassino was destroyed by Zoto, first Duke of Beasventum.

It is certain that Benedictine writers, like the Cassinese Abbot Angelo Della Noce, Hæften, Mabillon, and others, have treated of the life of St Benedict with such abundance of erudition and criticism that to approach them with the hope of discovering something that has been passed over would be a fruitless labour.

I will gather the fruit of their researches without repeating the arguments which they adduce for historical and chronological conclusions;—the reader will be able to find them in their books. If my book were to deal in criticisms of theirs, it would, without warrant, transgress the limits of its modest aim. Not wishing, therefore, to interrupt my narrative by erudite dissertations such as already exist, I shall look to the moral conscience of the reader, rather than to the expecta-

[1] See Appendix A.

tions of the learned. Wherefore, keeping before me the narrative of Pope Gregory, I have made every effort to learn from it the interior features of St Benedict's soul, as the exterior are sufficiently clear from the words of the history. And I confess that in this psychological enquiry, a phrase, a word, which I have read elsewhere and perhaps not understood, have often revealed to me much of the thought of the Saint; and thus the moral contour of his image, in whatever part interrupted, appears to me to turn to his advantage.

I have set value on the oral traditions regarding the life of St Benedict. These, supported by writers worthy of trust, and by religious monuments, and made more clear by the subsequent history of the Benedictine Order, are not to be despised, but to be received with respect, because, if they are not able to produce in us the certainty of facts, they always add to the reasonableness of conjecture.

2. The sources of my History having been touched upon, this is the opening of it:—"There was a man of holy life, Benedict, by grace and name; he being, from his infancy, of senile heart, and surpassing his age in gravity of morals, did not give his mind up to any pleasure."[1] With these words St Gregory enters upon the narrative of his life. That sentence, with its wonderful simplicity of form, places us within the soul of the Saint and lets us see his historical personality. That senile heart points to some length of years, to experience of life, to a laborious struggle with concupiscence, to a consciousness of his dangers, to a victory of the superior over the lower nature. Infancy suggests innocence unacquainted with evil; and finally the union of a senile heart with a soul free from sin proves the height of sanctity gained by the youth without the preparation of progressive training. Thus that perfection which others gain in the evening of life, St Benedict, by a kind prevention of

[1] Fuit voi vitæ venerabilis, gratia Benedictus et nomine, ab ipso pueritia suæ tempore cor gerens senile. Aetatem quippe moribus transiens, nulli animum voluptati dedit.—Dialog., cap. i.

God's grace, obtained in the dawn of his. So that, whilst he was a pilgrim on earth, as St Paul says, he had a foretaste of the joys of the vision of God.[1]

This comment on the words of St Gregory is not mine, but is due to the same Pope, who, after the narration of the first miracle which St Benedict performed whilst yet a youth, says that from this, present and future generations are able to conclude with what perfection his life began.[2] St Thomas uses this view when he wishes to show that it is possible to arrive at the highest state of holiness without the antecedent progression of grades.[3] From what has been said, it appears that no one from the time of the Apostles to the days of St Benedict had expressed so perfectly in the whole of his life the Gospel Ideal, as this same most venerable man.[4]

3. St Benedict was a Roman from the district beyond the Tiber. St Gregory says he was born in the province of Nursia, and Pope Zachary, commenting on him, adds that he arose like the morning star out of the country of Nursia, which was a province of the Romans, wishing to say that he was born on Roman soil. It is certain that St Gregory and subsequent Cassinese writers, Leo of Ostia[5] and Peter the Deacon,[6] by the word *oriundus* point rather to the country of his origin than of his birth; but there is no doubt that the most ancient and constant tradition attributes to the town of Nursia the glory of having given

[1] "Ad altitudinem angelicæ gloriæ sublevatus." Thus writes Pope Zachary in his Greek translation of the second of the *Dialogues* of St Gregory. This translation was rendered back into Latin because the Greek text contains a commentary on the Life of St Benedict.

[2] Dialog., cap. i.

[3] "Manifestum quoque est quod unus statim incipit non solum ab altiori statu, sed etiam ab altiori gradu sanctitatis, quamvis sit summum, ad quod alius pervenit per totam vitam suam. Unde Gregorius dicit; Omnes agnoscant a quanta Benedictus puer conversationis gratia et perfectione cæpisset."—2, 29, 189, Art 1 ad 2, et opusc. xiii. et viii.

[4] "Benedictus monachorum institutor, vir egregius, ac post Apostolos singularis."—Pet. Diac, De Viris Illust. Cassin., cap. i.

[5] Chron. Casin., cap. i.

[6] De Viris Illust. Cassin., cap. i.

birth to St Benedict. I believe the first to bear witness in writing to this tradition was Paul the Deacon,[1] in the eighth century, who calls him an *alumnus* of Nursia, thus determining not only the country but also the town. In the ninth century Adrevald,[2] a monk of Fleury, stated that he had seen the ruins of the ancient palace of St Benedict, which, arguing from its foundations, appeared to him to have belonged to a very powerful family. The principal town of Nursia is dedicated to St Benedict, and belonged in the seventeenth century to the Benedictines of the Celestine Congregation, having been, perhaps, given to them by their founder, Pope Celestine V.

The Nursians maintain that the chamber of St Benedict had been in the lower crypt of that church. In the year 1625 Pope Urban VIII. confirmed this tradition about St Benedict's native place in a Bull,[3] in which he granted to some natives of Nursia the liberty to found a pious sodality in the church of St Eustachius in Rome, under the patronage of SS. Benedict and Scholastica, as their fellow-citizens.

St Benedict was born in 480, the thirteenth year of the Pontificate of Simplicius, the fifth of Odoacer, King of Italy, and the seventh of Zeno, Emperor of the East. This was always the belief of the monks of Subiaco and Monte Cassino, and it has been followed by Baronius, Hæften,[4] and Mabillon.[5] His parents were Euproprius and Abundantia. The first authority for these names is the Cassinese, Peter the Deacon.[6] But the monk Gregory Mirzio, in his *Chronicle of Subiaco*, not long since published in Rome, cites some hexameter verses from a manuscript kept in the library of Subiaco, and

[1] Lib. i. cap. xxvi.

[2] De Miraculis S. B., cap. i. "Quantae dignitatis parentibus progenitus fuerit testantur ruinæ palatii eorum, cum ædicula prope mænia Nursinæ urbis sitæ. Tantæ quippe magnitudinis perplexique operis ex fundamentis constitisse convincitur, ut quælibet palatia potentissimorum superaverit Regum."

[3] Bullarium Rom., tom. iii.

[4] Disquisitiones Monasticæ, p. 56.

[5] Annales O. S. B., tom. i. p. 3.

[6] Op. cit.

which he regards as very ancient.[1] These verses make mention of St Benedict, of his birth, of his country Nursia, of his parents Euproprius and Abundantia, of his sister Scholastica, born at the same birth, of his nurse Cyrilla, of Romanus, who gave him the monastic habit, of the twelve monasteries founded by him on Subiaco, and of his disciples, Maurus and Placid. The antiquity of the manuscript shows us that the first origin of the tradition regarding the names of St Benedict's parents was at Subiaco, and that is Roman. It may be added that there is mention of those nobles who came from Rome to Subiaco to offer their sons to St Benedict, as will afterwards be narrated.

Mirzio, by conjecture, attributes these verses to the poet Mark, a disciple of St Benedict. If that were true, we should have the testimony of a contemporaneous writer. But I do not think these verses are the production of Mark, because, when compared with his composition,[2] they seem to belong to a later period, which is not as early as Peter the Deacon. Mark, although he lived in the sixth century, shows,

[1] This manuscript was published in Rome through the zeal of Mons. Crostaroza and Prior Allodi, O. S. B.

Christi quingentis denis bis circiter annis
Demptis Vir dictus bene, nomine, re, Benedictus
Claruit ex genere, et virtutum nobilitate
Clarior : ortus avo illustri, cui Iustinianus
Nomen erat ; patria ejus Nursia gaudet haberi ;
Euproprii hæc ditio patris. Abundantia mater
Dicta est, e qua et nata gemella Scholastica sancta.
Egressus Roma, nutrice sequente Cyrillæ,
Sublacrum petiit : puerum huc Romanus euntem
Sanctus vir monachum monachus vestivit, et antro.
Rupis desertæ degentem, pluribus annis
Nutriit. Hinc structor, rectorque monasteriorum
Bis sex, atque pater, quovis totidem sibi fratres
Discipulos statuit, quorum Maurum Placidumque
Ac plures alios sanctos, quos mundus adorat,
Vivendi quos ipsi modum faciendo docebat.
Qui modus est ipsi divinitus additus, ipse.

[2] Appendix ad Chron. Casin, ex MS. 257. Bibl. Casin.

in his verses, that he had not altogether forgotten the poets of the Augustan age; but the Subiaco verses are too barbarous to attribute them to his time and that of Paul the Deacon, when the Cassinese Alfanus and Guaiferius announced by their poetry the dawn of the revival of Latin literature in Italy.

There is no doubt that St Benedict was of very noble origin, for St Gregory tells us so,[1] and it is confirmed by the tradition which is found in the verses of St Bertarius, a Cassinese abbot of the ninth century, and in a very ancient Calendar, attributed by Della Noce to Florus of Lyons.

The Saint and his sister Scholastica came into the world at one birth. It was believed that this was first affirmed by the Abbot Trithemius, who lived in the fifteenth century. But there is mention of it in a sermon on St Scholastica by Bede (in the eighth century), and in the verses of Bertarius. The English monk Bede makes the Saint say, when she besought her brother to prolong their spiritual colloquy on the night of the miraculous shower of rain: "Thou didst not see that within the confines of the maternal womb we had one common abode."[2] To this does Paul the Deacon also refer in his verses in praise of the Saint when he mentions the tomb which St Benedict had prepared for himself, and in which he placed his deceased sister: "One same tomb," he says, "received those who were united in one will, and whom the same womb had brought forth;"[3] that is to say, that as they were joined together in their mother's womb, so were they also in the same sepulchre.

4. Immediately after the mention of St Benedict's birth and of his parents, St Gregory shows us the saint already in Rome, where he was sent by his parents to school to learn the liberal arts. His parents lived in Rome, for the biographer

[1] "Liberiori genere." See Della Noce's note on these words.

[2] "Tu non cernebas quod nobis una fuisset," Mansio.

[3] Acta SS. O. S. B., tom. i. p. 44:—

Unus habet tumulus tenuit quos una voluntas,
Quos parit una alvus.

does not say they sent him from Nursia to this city (missus)[1] but he distinctly says that they, being in Rome, confided him to preceptors (traditus).[2] Hence they had their palace there, in which St Benedict lived during the time that he attended the school, and which he afterwards abandoned to become a monk.

5. A very ancient tradition, not only oral, but consecrated by a religious cultus, and received as true by persons illustrious by their piety and learning, tells us that the paternal home of St Benedict in Rome became converted into a church, and was called the church of St Benedict *in Piscinula.*

This was built in that part of Rome beyond the Tiber, where the palace of the Anicii stood, and from which the *via Anicia* in that neighbourhood takes its name. The custom of converting their own houses into churches through pious motives was common among the Christians of Rome in those first ages of Christianity. To omit mention of others, thus did St Cecily with the palace of the Metelli in Trastevere; thus St Gregory the Great, in building the church and monastery of St Andrew on the Celian hill; thus again did Gregory III. in erecting the church of St Agatha in Trastevere; and, relying on the Acts of St Placid,[3] so did the patrician Tertullus, when he changed his own house on the Celian, in which his son Placid was born, into a church, dedicating it to the martyr Erasmus, and giving it to St Benedict. We do not know if the latter, whilst yet living, had converted into a place of divine worship his own paternal home. Constantine Gaetani, a Benedictine abbot, who was born in the sixteenth century, and died on the threshold of the following one, illustrated this fact with much erudition, affirming that the palace inhabited by St Benedict was, after his death, converted into a monastery, first of monks, then of nuns, to which was joined a church

[1] "Romae liberalibus litterarum studiis traditus fuerat." Dialog. II. in prologo.
[2] "Relicta domo rebusque patris." *Ib.*
[3] Vita et Passio Sti Placidi, p. 16. Acta SS. O. S. B., p. 52.

dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and called afterwards the Church of St Benedict, *in Piscinula.* The fame of this Roman patrician, the legislator of monks, which was very lively in the ages of faith, inflamed minds to cultivate his memory, and all that referred to his life. Perhaps, whilst he was yet living, his fellow-citizens held his paternal house in great veneration and converted it into a monastery and church. In the tenth century, a church of St Benedict in Rome was given by the Cassinese Abbot Leo to a certain Adelarius, on condition of honourably receiving within it the Abbot and monks of Monte Cassino as often and as long as they were in Rome for the transacting of business, and with the obligation of an annual tax of sixty denarii, payable to Monte Cassino. This is told us by Leo of Ostia,[1] in his chronicle on the eleventh century, who remarks that it belonged anciently to the Cassinese. The word *antiquitus* points to a very remote time beyond the tenth century, hence Mabillon, a man unaccustomed to accept traditions with his eyes shut, does not doubt that the above-mentioned church was that of St Benedict *in Piscinula*,[2] and that this was the spot inhabited by him in the Trastevere. In his own times, that is, in the seventeenth century, there yet remained traces of a magnificent edifice, which public fame reported to be part of St Benedict's paternal inheritance.[3] The Piazza[4] looked upon those ruins, which I have called splendid vestiges of sumptuous buildings, such as were the palaces of the Anicii in the age in which St Benedict was born.

It is certain that the church of St Benedict *in Piscinula* was at first dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. A very ancient image of her, painted on the wall, is a proof of the cultus that was given her. It is not unreasonable to conjecture that

[1] Chron., cap. li. [2] Tom. III., an. 904, p. 298.

[3] Cum ad discendas artes aptus esset pueri animus, Romæ liberalibus litterarum studiis informandus traditus est. Locum ubi tunc versebatur, ostendunt in regione trans Tiberim, ad ecclesiam St Benedicti *in Piscinula;* ubi illustria veteris aedificia rudera supersunt ex paterna, ut putant, ejus hereditate. Annales Benedic., Tom. I., lib. I., p. 3., n. 5.

[4] Emerologio di Roma Christiana, Tom. I. p. 201.

St Benedict converted his home into a church, under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, and that after his death it was dedicated to him by the piety of the faithful. The visitor would see indications that the decorations of the pavement were not all of one design. The first part, as you entered, was paved with large slabs of Parian marble, of decided Roman workmanship, and belonging to a period much more remote than the other part, which was decorated after the style of *opus Alexandrinum*, so much used in the Cassinese basilica by the artificers of Desiderius in the eleventh century. These different kinds of decoration, the one of a more remote, the other of a more recent age, would confirm the tradition of a house being converted into a place of divine worship. Perhaps that part of the pavement which was decorated at a later period, after the Byzantine style, indicated the spot occupied by the chamber in which the holy youth dwelt, when he was pursuing his studies in Rome. Indeed, one pious belief points out a distinct place, on the left as you enter, as the chamber of St Benedict; from this spot a very ancient image of the Blessed Virgin, with the Divine Infant, was excavated. This image, about the middle of the present century, was detached from the wall and carried elsewhere. The devout ambition of possessing it was certainly a perilous matter, for the unskilfulness of the person who detached it spoiled the features of the Divine Infant, which were renewed by an obscure painter. There are some precious things which can never be touched or taken away from the place where they are found; there are gems which, when detached from the original spot to which their history belongs, lose their value and run the risk of being destroyed.

These traditions, of which all writers, who have treated of the interesting things of Rome, have spoken, have had glorious testimony from pious and learned men of the sixteenth century, such as Cardinals Agostino Valesio, Francesco Sforza, Silvio Antoniano, Cæsar Baronius, and Robert Bellarmine, who were often accustomed to visit piously this monument of the youth of St Benedict, en-

couraging the faithful to imitate their example. Constantine Gaetani wrote a dissertation on this subject, which is found among his manuscript works, at present in the Alexandrine Library.[1] He, moreover, to honour the memory of St Benedict, which was venerated in this church *in Piscinula*, built near it a College for Benedictines, to be called the Gregorian College, for training up monks to preaching in defence of the faith against heretics. This college suggested the idea and design of the college "De Propaganda Fide," and was afterwards given to the English Benedictines for a Hospitium. The bones of Gaetani lie, to this day, unhonoured in that church for whose glory he had shown so much zeal.[2]

[1] Mentioned by Prince S. Camillo Massino in his *Memorie storiche di St Benedetto in Piscinula*, which we have had before us in writing these things.

[2] Rossi, Roma Moderna, 1697, p. 151, writing of the Church of St Benedict in Piscinula, says: "There lies buried on the Gospel side the famous Constantine Gaetani, a Benedictine monk, without any memorial, who died on the 7th of September 1650, in the eighty-fifth year of his age; his death being accelerated by a friend who stole several manuscript codices from his library, which was then in the neighbouring Hospitium of the foreign Benedictines, and afterwards transferred elsewhere." Mabillon states the same thing, Musæum Italicum, tom. i., p. 145. The learned Benedictine Pier Luigi Galletti composed his epitaph, perhaps imagining the translation of Constantine's bones into the Basilica of St Paul, which is as follows: "Heic situs est Constantinus Gaetani Barnabæ F. ex Gelasii II. et Bonifacii VIII. gente Syracusis natus, Monachus Coenobii Catanien. Congreg. Casinensis Prior S. Mariæ de Latina in civitate Messanæ, Abbas S. Baronti in Agro Pistoriensi, qui propter doctrinæ suæ præstantiam a Clemente VIII. Romam adscitus, S. Petri Damiani opera recensuit, notisque inlustrata in lucem edidit, et ingenti eruditionis copia sibi comparata, ex omnibus fere Italiæ Tabulariis, Baronium in Annalibus Ecclesiæ conficiendis adiuvit, et S. Apostolicæ Sedis veluti a sacris et secretioribus monumentis semper fuit. Ob fidei Orthodoxæ zelum MDCXXI. Gregorio XV. probante in Regione Transtyberina prope ædem S. Benedicti, quæ olim Aniciæ gentis et paterna domus fuisse fertur, emptis ære suo nobb. Castellanorum et Arberinorum fundis, Collegii ad monachos Benedictinos, qui adversus hæreses more majorum potentes opere et sermone prodirent, erudiendos, fundamenta locavit, Bibliothecam magna librorum editorum et MSS. copia refertam, quam Aniciam adpellari voluit, comparavit. Census quos potuit assignavit, et venerabile exemplum proposuit ad Collegium de propaganda fide excitandum, quo instituto eidem res tota cessit, interrupti Transtyberini ædificii hospitio monachis Anglicanis concesso. Obiit vir pietate, consilio et doctrina insignis, exquisitissimis scriptis celeber, magnis inimicitiis clarus, summis honoribus, quos nunquam ambire visus est, dignissimus, ingenti litterariæ Reipublicæ luctu A. MDCL., die VII. septemb. ætat. suæ A. LXXXV. Petrus Aloysuis Galletti

What we have narrated regarding the house of St Benedict and the Anician region in which it was built, throws light upon the opinion that Rome was the place of his origin and Nursia that of his birth, and that he belonged to the family of the Anicii. Hence Arnaldo Wion well said that St Benedict was *gente Romanus, patria Nursinus.*

6. From this house in Rome, and not from that in Nursia, as Della Noce wrongly supposes, St Benedict went forth to the solitude of Subiaco, being engaged in his studies in the former, not in the latter, city. St Gregory tells us that the desire to please God alone[1] was the cause of his flight from his paternal home. This was the principal, but not the only cause; for there were already in his time many monasteries[2] in which the holy youth could have well satisfied his desire. He did not do so, but chose the distant and solitary Simbruini mountains, an indication that he wished to withdraw himself from the eyes of his parents, who, as they had given him a polite education, perhaps were desirous of seeing him rise to the honours of public office, or espouse some young lady of patrician family. It is certain that he had seen one who, according to St Gregory, kindled in his heart a flame with which he had a long combat.

7. For this reason the youth jealously kept his intended departure secret, confiding it only to his nurse Cyrilla. She was full of love for him,[3] and, it must be said, was a person of great virtue. Instead, therefore, of turning the young boy from his design, she assisted him in his flight, and was his companion on the journey. She did this neither for reward nor any other reason of that kind, but through a pious wish to favour the design of the dear youth. The good Cyrilla

Rom. Monachus Casinen. Coenobii Florentini, Abb. SS. Salvatoris et Cirini, S. Mariæ ad Forum prope Ravennam, et S. Mariæ de Fontevivo in Agro Parmen., in Bibliotheca Vaticana linguæ Latinæ Scriptor, egregio Viro de Benedictino Ordine et de studio sacræ antiquitatis ad exemplum benemerito, ne hujus loci memoria ubi depositus est nunquam excidat.

[1] Dialog. "Relicta domo rebusque patris, soli Deo placere cupiens."

[2] Hieronym., Ep. xiii.

[3] Dialog., cap. i.—"Quæ hunc arctius amabat."

did not place carnal love before the spiritual love of God, as did that Gerula, the nurse of Nepotian, mentioned by St Jerome;[1] in order that he might not let himself be overcome by love and tears, which turned Nepotian from the eremitical life. The history of ancient nations shows us how, amongst the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, the nurse in the family held the place, as it were, of a second mother, and never left him whom she had once nourished at her breasts. It is sufficient to recall the nurse who accompanied Aeneas, when he came into Italy, and who, dying on the Mediterranean, gave the name to Gaeta, as Virgil poetically narrates.[2] Nor had the custom of adopting, so to say, the nurse into the family, died out among the Christians, as we find in the Acts of St Laurence that St Hippolytus, already advanced in years and head of the family, kept with him his nurse Concordia, afterwards a martyr. And to speak of times not far distant from those of St Benedict, we may call to mind the nurse of St Gregory, who, writing to a certain Rusticiana, says that he has a great affection for her. To Cyrilla, whose affection he reciprocated in an equal degree, St Benedict was able to open his mind freely, without the restraint of reverence towards his parents, who, if they had known and approved of his design, would not have allowed him to go alone with that poor woman, but would have given him, as a companion, either his pedagogue or some other friend.[3] The departure of the Saint was, therefore, clandestine and unknown to his relations. I say to his relations and not to his father, whom he had perhaps already lost, because St Gregory does not make any mention of him. He says only that he left his paternal home and possessions, and is silent about his father.

8. St Gregory puts forward in these words the reason of

[1] Epist. 1.

[2] Æneid, vii. 1 :—

"Tu quoque litoribus nostris, Æneia nutrix,
Aeternum, moriens, nomen, Caieta, dedisti."

[3] "Nutricem meam, quam mihi per litteras commendatis, omnino diligo."—Regest., lib. iii. ep. 44.

his flight: "But seeing that during their studies many fell into vice, he withdrew the foot which he had, as it were, placed on the threshold of the world: for if he had not for a time cast learning aside, he also would have been plunged, body and soul, into ruin. But abandoning studies, his paternal home and possessions, and desiring to please God alone, he was anxious to put on the garb of a monk. He retired, therefore, knowingly unknowing, and wisely unwise."[1] These words would, at first sight, lead us to understand that the holy youth retired from his studies, wanting in every kind of knowledge, unless it were said that he was conversant with the pestilent knowledge of the vices in which his school companions were sunk. See how St Thomas interpreted these words of St Gregory: "He did not abandon study as if he wished to avoid science and study, but because he feared the customs and familiarity of students. Therefore those do well in these days who, turning their backs on student-life, enter into religion, in which they can give themselves to study."[2] And the Angelic Doctor himself was a splendid example of this.

9. St Gregory's narrative is silent regarding the age of the Saint when he came to Rome, of the special reason of his flight, and of the culture of his mind, which was suddenly withdrawn from the study of Letters. But his words, when brought under the light of logical reasoning, give us more information than appears at first sight.

As St Gregory calls him a mere boy, *puer*, and relates that in his flight from his paternal home he was accompanied by his nurse, as if the age of the fugitive needed the care of such an one, all writers have agreed that St Benedict, when he left his father's house, was in the fourteenth year of his age.[3] It appears that the first to doubt this was Baronius, considering it almost impossible that in so tender

[1] "Recessit igitur scienter nescius et sapienter indoctus." Dialog. II., cap. i.

[2] Opusc. 15, cap. ii. "St Benedictus non discessit a studio, quasi scientiam horrens, aut studium; sed sæcularem vitam et societatem formidans . . . et ideo nunc laudabiliter faciunt qui, sæculari vita studentium relicta, ad religionem transeunt, in qua studio vacare possunt."

[3] Ann. 444.

an age the boy should be able to face the sacred horrors and austerities of a life in the cave of Sublacum. And here I may be permitted to give my own opinion, which is not founded on any historical document of the time, but on the very facts narrated by St Gregory. I am of opinion that the flight of St Benedict from his home took place about the twentieth year of his age. In St Gregory's narrative it is said that the devil tried to draw the young penitent out of his cave at Sublacum, back again into the world, by a temptation of the flesh; adding that the evil spirit brought before his mind the lively image of a certain lady whom he had once seen in Rome. Note, reader, that the lady tempter is well defined, and is not that indefinite, vague lady of a number who, seen in the Roman circles, troubled the peace of St Jerome in the grotto at Bethlehem.[1]

This kind of temptation does not belong to hearts so tender; in order to triumph it must have bodies and souls more accustomed to the struggles of life, and of a certain kind of experience of the world, which would be monstrous in the bosom of a boy of fourteen. Gregory speaks of a lady, well known in Roman society, the memory of whom had not died out, but was vivid enough to make a savage attack upon him in the cave at Sublacum. He affirms that Benedict despised the world as a faded flower, which he would have been free to enjoy. If he despised the world, he must have first known it; if he had been free to enjoy it, he already had the disposition of mind and body to do so, a knowledge and disposition unseasonable in a young boy.

Christian society, both in the East and the West, was, in the fourth century, infected with all the vices of Paganism. The protection of Constantine and his donations had multiplied exceedingly the number of the faithful; but this was a harvest which yielded little wheat and much cockle. It was

[1] Ep. 18 ad Eustochium. "O quoties ego ipse in eremo constitutus, et in illa vasta solitudine, quæ, exusta ardoribus, horridum monachis præstat habitaculum, putabam me Romanis interesse deliciis. . . . Ille igitur ego, qui ob gehennæ metum, tali me carcere ipse damnaveram, scorpionum tantum socius et ferarum, sæpe choris intereram puellarum."

easy to recite the Apostles' Creed and to go in crowds to the ceremonies of the Church, but the reform of habits went on so slowly that Christians and Pagans were corrupted with the most shameful vices. We know what was written of those customs in the East by Gregory Nazianzen, Ephrem the Syrian, and Chrysostom; in the West by Cyprian, Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine. Clerics and monasteries were not free from the universal corruption, in those times which were so near to a Paganism not yet dead. Let the reader go to St Jerome,[1] and he will find out their unbridled desire of riches, their luxury and concubinage. Rome was such as it appears from the few words of St Gregory.[2] Regarding the dangers to which the virtue of youth was exposed in Rome, not long before the time of St Benedict, we have the testimony of Paulinus of Nola, who, in writing to Lucentius, who learned rhetoric under St Augustine, used these words — "Now Rome, alas! powerful in overcoming the strong, but a bad counsellor, tempts thee with various images. But, my son, I pray thee have always before thee, in the midst of the corruptions of the city, the thought of thy father Augustine. With eyes and mind fixed on him, amid so many dangers of uncertain life, thou wilt walk securely."[3]

Ammianus Marcellinus,[4] about a century before St

[1] Epist. 34, ad Nepot.

[2] "Sed cum in iis (litterarum studiis) multos ire per abrupta vitiorum cerneret."—Dialog. ii., Præf.

[3] Nunc te sollicitat variis malesuada figuris
Heu! validos etiam sternere Roma potens.
Sed tibi, nate precor, semper Pater Augustinus
Occurset cunctas urbis ad illecebras.
Illum tanta inter fragilis discrimina vitæ
Aspiciens et habens pectore, tutus eris.

[4] "Postremo ad id indignitatis est ventum, ut cum peregrini ob formidatum haud ita dudum alimentorum inopiam pellerentur ab Urbe præcipites, sectatoribus disciplinarum liberalium impendio paucis sine respiratione ulla extrusis, tenerentur mimarum asseclæ veri, quique id simularunt ad tempus: et tria millia saltatricum ne interpellata quidem, cum choris totidemque remanerent magistri. Et licet

Benedict's birth, relates that one day, in Rome, for fear of a famine, all foreigners were driven beyond the confines of the city. The decree of expulsion affected also those who exercised scientific and liberal professions, but actors and three thousand dancers and as many singers were exempted from expulsion. These, with their curled hair, were met on every side. Think what food was offered to youthful passion in this human carrion. This it was that horrified the holy youth and made him soon withdraw, as St Gregory tells us, from his corrupted schoolfellows. But the lady seen by the youth in Rome, whose image haunted him in the cave of Subiaco, was not one of the harlot tribe that Ammianus describes. These women do not remain in the imagination, nor do they leave a vestige of virtue in a man.

The lady seen by the young Benedict in Rome was one who had entered into his heart through ordinate love, and remained there until the absolute love of God had combated and dislodged her, in order that, with the Cross upon the shoulder, Christ might be followed. That was a sharp and generous conflict, not between reason and sense, but between the idea of natural love and the Ideal of love which is Christ. For St Benedict to have been able to enjoy the world freely,[1] and not to have wished to do so, what was it but to renounce lawful pleasures, in order to follow the Evangelical Counsels? In a word, the lady seen by St Benedict was a refined young girl, perhaps of the Roman aristocracy, of the house of the Meruli, as will be said by and by, who, having fallen in love with him, took possession of his heart; perhaps, at first, she was loved in return, and afterwards, for the love of Christ, vigorously rejected.

Hence St Benedict did not leave his paternal home in

quocumque oculos flexeris, feminas adfatim multas spectare cirratas, quibus si nupsissent, per ætatem ter jam nixus poterat suppetere liberorum, adusque tædium pedibus pavimenta tergentes, jactari volubilibus gyris, dum exprimunt innumera simulacra, quæ finxere fabulæ theatrales." Ammian. Marcell. Rerum gest., lib. xiv., cap. vi., p. 31.

[1] "Libere uti potuisset."

Rome[1] through the sole desire of Christian perfection, but also to conquer a great temptation, which required an age beyond that of boyhood for its subjugation. What that age definitely was we can conjecture from the word *libere*, used by St Gregory. A youth who was able to enjoy the world freely must have passed from under the restraint of a pedagogue. Let the reader notice in the footnote how Terence describes, to a nicety, this liberty to which St Gregory alludes, but does not give the reason of.[2]

Pope Zachary, who rendered into Greek the second book of St Gregory's *Dialogues*, translates the word *puer*, youth, (adolescens). And in the Rule itself of St Benedict, the word *puer*, when it is not followed by those other words *minori ætate*, signifies youth (adolescens). Now adolescence, which begins with the fourteenth year of life and ends with the twenty-eighth, or even later,[3] allows us to

[1] "Relicta domo rebusque patris."

[2] *Andria*, Act I. Scene I.

> Nam is post quam excessit ex ephebis, Sosia,
> *Liberius vivendi fuit potestas ;* nam antea
> Qui scire posses, aut ingenium noscere
> Dum ætas, metus, magister prohibebant.

[3] The Benedictine Edmund Schmidt, of the Abbey of Metteh, in his dissertation on *the scientific culture of St Benedict*, in the year 1886, which I have lately become acquainted with, gives, for other reasons, to the word *puer* the meaning I have explained. I will not omit to mention that on this question my very renowned brother in religion, Don Ambrose Amelli, wrote to me in these words : "To the arguments adduced by Father Schmidt in support of his interpretation of the word *puer* in the sense of youth (adolescens), it appears to me that two others might be added, the one taken from St Benedict, the other from Pope Zachary.

"As to St Benedict, the word *puer* is never found in his *Rule* unaccompanied by *minori ætate* (ch. xxx.-lix.) or *parvi* (lxiii.), in order to signify boys. This need for explanation felt by St Benedict gives us reason to believe that the word *puer* by itself signifies *adolescens*, as may be seen from chaps. xxx. and lxiii. But if in ch. lxiii. we find, *Pueris per omnia ab omnibus disciplina conservata*, this may be explained by saying that *puer* includes *pueri parvi* and *adolescentes*.

"As to Zachary it is evident that he has retained the signification of *adolescens* in the word *puer* of St Gregory. Indeed, in ch. ii. of Book ii. of the *Dialogues*, translated into Greek, he thus renders this passage: 'Quandam namque ali-

fix the flight of St Benedict in the twentieth year of his life.[1]

Thus his age would be proportioned to the temptation which was first encountered in Rome, and afterwards renewed in the cave of Subiaco, and that time is allowed which was necessary for the cultivation of his mind in the higher studies of Philosophy and Law.[2] We have an argument for this in the words of St Gregory, *relictis litterarum studiis*,[3] the word *litteræ* among the Latins signifying the high study of Philosophy.[4] Let the reader take notice that the word *relictis* clearly indicates that the saint was already engaged in the study of Letters, when he left his home.

10. The proximate reason of his flight from Rome was to put on the monastic habit,[5] for which he abandoned his paternal home and possessions. In order to escape the affectionate obstruction of his relatives, who would have opposed his pious design, he kept it secret from all, except his nurse, who wished to accompany him in his clandestine flight.

Both going forth from Rome by the via Nomentana, they took the road towards the Tiburtine hills, and entering into the valley through which the river Anio flows, they came to the Simbruini mountains. Having arrived at a place called Enfide, in the region of the Equicoli, about two miles from Subiaco, they there rested, detained by the charity of some good people, who gave them hospitality in the church of St Peter. Whilst resting themselves there from the

quando fæminam viderat: Γυναῖκα γάρ τινα ἦν ποτε ἑορακὼς ἦν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ της νεότητος αὐτοὺ.'

"Therefore Zachary explains the word *aliquando* by saying, *that is in the time of his youth*, νέοτητος; he does not say παιδίας.

"This agrees precisely with the observations already made by Father Schmidt on the word ἔφηβος."

[1] See Forcellini, on the word *Adolescens.*

[2] See Father Schmidt, "Intorno alla coltura scientifica di St Benedetto."

[3] Dialog., cap. i. [4] Cicero, V. Tuscul., cap. xxxvi., in fine.

[5] "Sanctæ conversationis habitum quæsivit," which means to say, "to become a monk." Dialog., cap. i.

fatigues of the journey, it happened that the nurse, who had borrowed a sieve from the neighbours, left it uncautiously on the table, from which it fell upon the ground and was broken. The good woman was much grieved at this, and was dissolved in tears. But the holy youth Benedict, on seeing the dear nurse thus disconsolate and weeping, and compassionating her grief, put the two parts of the broken sieve together and began to pray with many tears. When he arose from prayer, he found the sieve so perfectly mended that there was no sign of the fracture, and with sweet words of consolation he restored it, whole, to the nurse. The fame of this miracle spread over the country, and all the inhabitants were in such admiration at it, that they hung up the sieve on the church door as a testimony to present and future generations, of the perfection of the beginnings of the conversion of the youth Benedict. The sieve remained suspended there for many years before the eyes of all, even to the time of the Lombards.[1]

11. But the youth, more desirous of bearing tribulation than of winning the praise of men, and of suffering for God than of being exalted, fled secretly from his nurse, and went alone to seek for a perfect solitude, where he could pass his days in penance, like the solitaries of Egypt and Palestine. The legend of St Anthony's life, brought to Rome by Bishop Athanasius, was well known among the Roman patricians; and as it had drawn away into Palestine the noble matrons Marcella, Paula, and others, to lead a life of severe penance under the direction of St Jerome, so did it inflame also the soul of this noble youth to imitate their example. Thus, having triumphed over carnal temptation in Rome, and abandoned his home and relations; having been the victor over the spirit of pride at Enfide, he broke the last tie that yet bound him to the world by abandoning his beloved nurse. That brave woman, after

[1] "Quod annis multis illic ante omnium oculos fuit, et usque ad hæc Longobardorum tempora super fores ecclesiæ pependit." Dialog., cap. i.

having, as it were, conducted by the hand to the threshold of the cave of Subiaco the dear child of her heart, humble and no longer mentioned, hides herself in the history of the past. But the memory of her did not fade from the mind of St Benedict, who rejoined her in God, never again to leave her.

CHAPTER II.

1. He flies to the mountains of Subiaco—2. Meets Romanus—3. Who he was that clothed him with the monastic habit and put him in the cave—4. The cave of Subiaco—5. St Benedict is hidden there, and kept alive by Romanus—6. His contemplative life—7. How on Easter Day a good priest came and brought him food—8. He converts some shepherds to Christ—9. He encounters and conquers the sensual temptation—10. He goes to Vicovaro to govern some monks, who want to poison him.

1. AFTER walking for some time along the Simbruini mountains, he came to a place called *Sublaco*, or *Subiaco*, about forty miles from Rome. It received its name from a lake which lay above it, formed by art in the time of the Emperor Claudius, with the waters, held within embankments, of the river Anio, which descends through the valleys from the mountains above.

2. Whilst the youth, a stranger to the country, was taken up with searching for a recess suitable for his designs, lo! a certain monk, called Romanus, stood before him, who, perhaps astonished to see wandering amongst those savage mountains a youth of gentle birth, who showed in his appearance the nobility of his race, could not help asking him whither he was going. And with such courtesy and kindness of manner did he interrogate him, that the boy opened his heart to him. There is no doubt that he told him of his country, of his relations, and of the events of his life; of how and why God had put into his mind the desire of serving Him in solitude, and the firm resolve to carry out His Will. He besought him to help him to fulfil this purpose, to clothe him with the monastic habit, and to show him the way, not to any monastery or abode of cenobites, but to some unknown spot in the mountains, where he could lead an eremitical life. All this he recommended to the

charity of the good monk, conjuring him to keep it locked up in his breast, and to jealously guard the secret.

3. From that day Romanus considered him as the son of his heart. He was not a cenobite, but was a man deeply versed in the things of God, and had the reputation of a Saint, not only among monks, but in the universal Church. He is commemorated in the Roman Martyrology on the 22nd of May. Arnald Wion, in his Martyrology, gives a sermon of the Cassinese Abbot St Bertarius, in honour of Romanus, whom he praises in these terms—"He was once the nourisher, the companion, and the co-operator in spiritual things of the Blessed Father Benedict, and, like a veteran soldier and warrior, well skilled, after long experience, in the art of war, he instructed in doctrine, nourished with food, and strengthened by his counsel him whom he met hastening to prepare himself for the spiritual contest. Truly happy and glorious was he, whose lot it was to educate the man who was to nobly guard, strengthen, and wonderfully exalt in every part of the world the citadel of monasticism, founded on Christ."[1]

Bertarius narrates, in the above-mentioned sermon, that Romanus was compelled, by the devastations of the Barbarians, to leave his abode at Sublacum, and that, under divine guidance, he passed into France. There, in the territory of Auxerre, he founded the monastery of Font-Rouge, which he governed for many years, and then died at an advanced age.[2] In this monastery he was found by St Maurus, who had been sent into France by St Benedict to propagate his Order, as Faustus tells us in his Life of him; and there, after the feast of the Pasch, they learned by divine revelation the death and glory of St Benedict,

[1] "Qui quondam beati Patris Benedicti alumnus, et ita rebus divinis extitit co-operator et socius. Quem ad spiritualis agonis tyrocinium properantem, tamquam miles emeritus, et diutius jam exercitatione instructissimus præliator, doctrina instruxit, pane aluit, exhortatione firmavit. Vere felix, vere gloriosus; cui concessum est, ut illius educator existeret, qui monasticæ religionis arcem, jam super Christum fundatam, quaquaversum per orbem nobiliter excoleret, proveheret, sublimaret." [2] Acta SS. O. S. B., tom. i. p. 84.

which they celebrated with psalms and prayers. Thus Romanus from Subiaco, and Maurus from Monte Cassino, found themselves united, in France, in celebrating the first festival of the "transitus" of St Benedict, as witnesses of his legend, which was begun in the cave of Subiaco and finished on the top of Monte Cassino.

Romanus, with a foresight, perhaps, of what this youth would one day become, who so ardently desired to cast himself into the path of severe penance, at once clothed him with the monastic habit. The monks afterwards wished to preserve the perpetual remembrance of this fact, and so built, in the place where it happened, the little Oratory dedicated to the Holy Cross, which had the pious history painted within it by a very ancient hand, and outside, a trunk of fluted column fixed in the ground, which is yet to be seen. Romanus then led his novice to a cave, which opened in the bosom of the mountain, called Taleo in the ancient Bulls of Nicholas I. and John X.

4. It seems that in those times this cave was unknown to everyone, and for this reason it was chosen to hide the secret confided to Romanus. It has for a roof and shelter a very high rock, from which no one can descend, and from below steep precipices and woods make the ascent to it, by any secret path, very hazardous. There runs at its base, in the depth of the valley, the river Anio. Its running stream was an admonition of the passing nature of our life;—the continuous noise of its waters a *memento homo* of the eternity of that life which awaits us after death. It looks to the south, and the sudden rise of the mountains on the opposite side takes away the view of the most beautiful landscape, leaving towards the east only a glimpse of the light of heaven, and the brief vision of the distant heights and of a castle, bright in the sunlight. It is a fearful solitude, which precludes every breath of human intercourse, savage, affording little of those consolations with which the beauties of nature usually moisten the aridity of the human mind, but powerful in lifting up and keeping in the sight of God, the soul that

thirsts for Him, as the Fountain of Wisdom and Love. The silence of the things of the world stamps on these rocks a kind of mark of prehistoric virginity, because not yet violated by the history of uncivilised man.

5. Always and everywhere is God adored, but only amid these mountains is God felt. For this reason it was that St Benedict entered into that cave, and there he passed three years of hard penance. Within that cave Romanus left the young novice, not to prove the maturity of his spirit in the school of the Evangelical Counsels, for the very flight from his paternal home and the fact of the love of God driving him into that solitude, were sufficient to convince him that his disciple was already so prevented by God's grace as to be able to do those things which so many holy persons, more advanced, did only after a long exercise of preparation. And St Thomas took St Benedict as an illustration of this doctrine of his. "If the solitary life," he says, "is embraced without previous exercise, it is most dangerous, unless divine grace make up for that which is otherwise obtained by practice, as is evident in Blessed Benedict."[1] Wherefore, having promised the young recluse that he would help him to sustain the life he had chosen, Romanus returned to his monastery on the top of Mount Taleo. This monastery was dedicated to the martyr St Biagius, and was governed by a certain Abbot Theodatus with special statutes, without the guidance of a written rule, according to the custom that prevailed before St Benedict propagated his. In what way Romanus afterwards carried out his charitable designs with regard to the young hermit and kept the secrecy which he had promised, St Gregory tells us in his narrative.

Romanus was accustomed to secretly lay aside a part of the bread apportioned to him, and, at the decline of day, take it to Benedict. Since there was no direct way from the monastery to the cave, because a high rock, as has been said, rose above it, and he did not wish to let himself be seen by going along the paths from below, he crept to the top of the

[1] St Thomas, 2—2 189, art 1, 2. Ad. 2—2, et opusc. 13, cap. vii.

precipice, and, by a long rope, let down, in a basket, to the mouth of the cave, the small portion of bread of which he had deprived himself. He had attached to the rope a little bell, which rang with a faint sound when the rope was let down, and gave warning to the recluse. St Gregory relates that one day the Evil Spirit, angry at the charity of the one and the refection of the other, threw a stone at the sonorous little messenger and broke it into pieces. But the good monk did not give up his charity, for during three years he nourished, with his poor fare, him who afterwards, with the bread of free agricultural labour, supported the famished multitudes that were thrown into distress by the fury of the Barbarians. It is not correct to say that Theodatus's monk sustained the life of the body only. The word *ministravit*, which St Gregory uses, signifies every kind of office, and amongst those that of leading the spirit to the height of contemplation. In the basket of bread there must have been found also, at least, a copy of the Gospels.

6. In that cave he remained for three years, unknown to all except Romanus; hence we can say nothing of his solitary life. Let not the reader ask me regarding the hair-shirt, or the scourge, or the number of prayers, or other proofs of corporal penance to which St Benedict gave himself. I have found nothing of this; but reasoning, more than conjecture, tells us, and lets us see what he did. As we shall be told later, the Saint once went forth from his cave to govern some disorderly monks, who tried to poison him, so he returned to it. "He then returned," says St Gregory, "to the place of his dear solitude, and alone, under the eyes of Him who looks upon us from on high, he dwelt with himself."[1] He was with himself, abstracted from creatures, under the eye of the Creator: this was the whole of that life to which Benedict accustomed himself in the cave of Subiaco.

What appeared to many as a Brahmin's narcotic fetichism

[1] "Tunc ad locum dilectæ solitudinis rediit, et solus in superni spectatoris oculis habitavit secum."—Dialog., cap. iii.

BENEDICTINE MONASTERY OF SACRO SPECO.

was a reflection of the mind upon itself, a powerful concentration of its faculties, a fertilising of its powers, an aspiration towards an act unperformed by most men,—it was an invocation of Absolute Virtue, which is God. The outcome of this spiritual energy I consider to be contemplation, which gave such beauty to certain souls in the poetical paradise of Alighieri.[1] This phenomenon of mystic psychology does not manifest itself to him who, luxuriating in reason's delights, does not believe; but even the Pagans learned it from the catechism of nature. I find that Seneca wrote that the best proof of a well-ordinated mind is to stand firm and dwell with itself.[2] This power was habitual in St Benedict; but the "standing firm" of Seneca was in him not inactivity,—it was an intense act of love towards God, which God recompensed by the gift of the knowledge of himself and those like unto him.

In this revelation the penitent recluse read the sorrowful history of his own times, and wept over the wreck of the social fabric. In the desert which the devastations of the Northmen made, he saw arising his own Abbeys as the type and model of the Christian city. Augustine has written of the City of God; St Benedict has built up that of men. In that cave of Subiaco he received from the hands of God the exemplar archetype of it, and he prophesied its destinies. What a rich treasure in the seeming inactivity of his contemplations.

7. It was the Pasch, perhaps of the year 497, if we may believe Haeften's Chronology,[3] which, however, is very uncertain.

The sun of that day always sheds his light upon all. It is an annual sign that God wishes well to all men, whether just or unjust. Everywhere does his ray penetrate, and everywhere does it awaken the joys of renewed life: at its embrace chaste love springs up in young hearts, the hopes of the aged

[1] Paradiso, c. 22.

[2] "Primum argumentum compositæ mentis existimo posse consistere, et secum morari."—Ep. 2.

[3] In vitam S.B. *Prolegom.* xix. p. 57.

grow green again, and even the unconscious joyousness of those that are hunger-stricken for want of the bread of true faith, tells us, without knowing it, that God is good. Into the cave alone of Benedict did that ray find no entrance, for he who had become absorbed in the contemplation of eternal things, had lost count of years and days. But, if the spirit exulted with love, the flesh grew weak through hunger. This the Lord did not wish, for the time had now arrived when that hidden light should come forth to guide men. The young hermit was now mature for that Apostolate to which God had destined him. St Gregory adds, that this manifestation of Benedict came about, in order that the good Romanus might rest from the long fatigue of his ministry. And he is correct. Now it happened on that day that a priest, who had a cure of souls in a place four miles distant from the cave, according to the tradition which the Frenchman, Father Simon Millet, found among the monks of Subiaco in the sixteenth century,[1] after having discharged his duty to his flock, was in his presbytery alone, and without the help of a domestic servant, and was preparing his Easter repast. Let us note this, for we shall shortly have to speak of another priest who was an enemy to Benedict, and who had more domestics than was fitting in his house. It was a festival day, and it was not suitable that he who had sung in the Church, "This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad therein," should restrict himself to ordinary fare. Something of the great festal day ought to enter into it. As with much care he was busy over this, the Lord appeared to him, saying — "Thou art taken up in preparing thyself a savoury dish, whilst my servant there"— perhaps pointing out the cave—"is dying of hunger." He arose at once, and on that very Easter-day he set out, with the food prepared for himself, to the place indicated to him. Among the precipitous heights, along the deep valleys, and by the steep cliffs, he went in search of the man of God, whom he found hidden in the cave. After having offered up

[1] Hæften, p. 74.

prayer, and given thanks to the Almighty God, and, after speaking of spiritual things, they had sat for a time, the priest guest said, "Arise, let us eat, for to-day is the Pasch." To which the man of God replied—"I know well it is the Pasch, for to-day have I merited to see thee." With this urbanity of speech, which reveals, under the rough garb of penitence, the polished Roman, St Benedict saluted the first guest who presented himself at his cave, and this he afterwards established in his *Rule* as a dogma of Christian courtesy.[1]

Thus the very sight of his guest was a Pasch for him; but, in that sequestered spot of penance, he knew nothing of the solemnity which recurred on that day. The venerable priest, putting metaphor aside, told him that it was really the day of the Lord's Resurrection, and that it was not becoming to fast. "It is on this account," he said, "that I have been sent to share with thee these gifts of Almighty God." Then both, blessing the Lord, partook of food; after their refection and spiritual discourse together, the priest returned to his church. Without any secret to keep, as Romanus had, the charitable priest, thinking over the things he had seen and heard in the cave, went on his journey narrating them, and perhaps, when he arrived among his own people, he had to discourse about them for their edification. So the fame of them soon spread through those mountains, and excited such wonder that every one went to the Sacred Grotto to see such a miracle of sanctity.

8. The first to go there were some shepherds, who were tending their flocks in that neighbourhood. Looking into the cave, they thought that its inhabitant, clothed as he was in skins, was a wild beast of the forest, and not a human being. But on approaching near, and looking steadfastly at him, they were at once filled with a sweet veneration. For it is written in Benedictine liturgy—"There was a man of God, Benedict, of placid countenance, adorned with angelic

[1] Cap. liii. "De hospitibus suscipiendis. Omnes supervenientes hospites tamquam Christus suscipiantur."

manners, and with such brightness diffused around his person that, whilst living on earth, he dwelt in heaven."[1]

Those used to commune with God always bear in their countenance something of heaven. Moses, when he came from the presence of God, had his face irradiated, so that the Hebrews were not able to look upon it. And Stephen, in the synagogue at Jerusalem, appeared with the face of an angel to those who were about to stone him. Hence those shepherds felt themselves so attracted to the young hermit by the sweetness of his manners and words, that they remained, with a simple ingenuous faith, in fixed attention on him, and many were converted "from the habit of brutal manners to ways of piety." It is not a far-fetched conjecture that the conversion of those poor herdsmen came about through the repeated instruction of the Saint, in such a way that from that cave there began that Apostolate, which was afterwards exercised among the idolators of Monte Cassino, and later, carried on by his sons, the regenerators to Christ of the nations of the West.

So there was no longer any one, throughout that neighbourhood, who was ignorant of his name, and numbers of devout persons flocked to his cave; who, imitating the above-mentioned priest, brought offerings of food for the body, and, in exchange, received "into their hearts from his lips the food of life"—in other words, the principles of Christian teaching.

9. But, before he went forth from his cave to the ministry for which God destined him, his virtue was put to a very severe test. In what way this happened I will not myself narrate. It is better that St Gregory should tell us, and he does so in the following words: "On a certain day, when he was alone, the tempter presented himself. For a small, dark bird, commonly called a blackbird, began to fly round his face, and came so near to him, that if he had wished, he could have seized it with his hand. But, on his making the sign of the cross, the bird flew away. Then such a violent

[1] "Erat vir Dei Benedictus, vultu placido, moribus decoratus angelicis; tantaque circa eum claritas excreverat, ut, in terris positus, in cælestibus habitaret."

temptation of the flesh at once followed, as he had never before experienced. For the evil spirit brought before his imagination a certain woman, whom he had formerly seen, and he inflamed his heart with such vehement concupiscence at the memory of her, that he had very great difficulty in repressing it, and being almost overcome, he thought of quitting his solitude. Suddenly, however, assisted by heavenly grace, he recovered himself, and seeing, close by, thick growths of briers and nettles, he cast off his clothes and threw himself into the midst of them. He then rolled about a long time, so that his whole body was, in consequence, covered with wounds, and thus, through those bodily wounds, he cured the wound of his soul, for he turned pleasure into pain. When he burned externally with the smart of pain, he extinguished the unlawful fire that burned within. He therefore overcame sin, because he changed the fire. From that time forward, as he himself told his disciples, the fire of concupiscence was so completely extinguished in him, that he never afterwards had the slightest feeling of it." [1]

It is clear, from this account, that the lady, who had once been seen, did not depart from the Saint's memory, but, having entered through the windows of the senses, she hid herself in one of those recesses which are ever found in the

[1] "Quadam vero die, dum solus esset, tentator adfuit. Nam nigra, parvaque avis, quæ vulgo merula nominatur, circa ejus faciem volitare cæpit, ejusque vultui importune insistere, ita ut manu capi possit, si hanc vir sanctus tenere voluisset: sed signo crucis edito, recessit avis. Tanta autem carnis tentatio, ave eadem recedente, secuta est, quantam vir sanctus nunquam fuerat expertus. Quandam namque aliquando fæminam viderat, quam malignus spiritus ante ejus mentis oculos reduxit: tantoque igne servi Dei animum in specie illius accendit, ut se in ejus pectore amoris flamma vix caperet, et jam pæne deserere eremum voluptate victus deliberaret. Cum subito superna gratia respectus ad semetipsum reversus est, atque urticarum et veprium juxta densa succrescere fructeta conspiciens, exutus indumento, nudum se in illis spinarum aculeis, et urticarum incendiis projecit: ibique diu volutatus, toto ex eis corpore vulneratus exiit, et per cutis vulnera eduxit a corpore vulnus mentis: quia voluptatem traxit in dolorem. Cumque bene pænaliter foris arderet, extinxit quod intus illicite ardebat. Vicit itaque peccatum, quia mutavit incendium. Ex quo videlicet tempore, sicut post discipulis ipse perhibebat, ita in eo est tentatio voluptatis edomita, ut tale aliquid in se minime sentiret."—Dialog., Lib. ii. Cap. ii.

depths of young hearts. Whilst the man tried with all his might, like St Paul, to bring under the yoke of reason the rebellious senses, the woman, who had intruded into his heart, suddenly raised a terrible tumult of those affections which he had thought already dead. This confirms what we have already said regarding Benedict's flight from Rome, and the age at which he took it. Moreover, the word *aliquando* of St Gregory, commented by Pope Zachary, signifies, together with the words *juventutis tempore*,[1] the first years of youth, which could not be the beginning of his fourteenth year. And thus we again conclude that the Saint left Rome when he was twenty years old, and that the vision of the beautiful woman was not a passing temptation, but one that was long, persevering, and unyielding.

The Saint having recovered peace of mind after his bloody triumph, God found him prepared for the direction of others, and a great many persons who, after his example, had left the world, began to put themselves under his guidance, because the fame of his sanctity had made him celebrated in those parts, and he was considered capable, both by virtue and age, of governing communities of monks. Since most authors say he remained only three years in solitude, I do not know how, if he retired there at the age of fourteen, he could be fit at seventeen years of age for the government of monasteries.

10. There was in the territory of Latium, between Subiaco and Tivoli, a place called Vicovaro. According to Bzovius, in his Annals,[2] it occupied the summit of a rock, which was rendered impregnable on two sides by steep cliffs, which on one side were furrowed by a rushing torrent and on the other plunged down into the waters of the Anio. The third side was defended by a strong rock, a very high tower, and an artificial moat. There was also a line of wall composed of immense square stones, perhaps a remnant of Etruscan work. On this vulture's nest had settled a family of monks, who, after the death of their Abbot, agreed in council to ask St

[1] ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς νεότητος αὐτοῦ "in tempore juventutis illius."—Lib. ii. cap. 2.
[2] Annal, 1461.

Benedict to undertake the government of their monastery. And so enthusiastic were they in the resolution they had adopted, that they did not make known their request through messengers, but the whole community went in a body to ask Benedict to be their Abbot. The Saint, who had already instructed in the monastic life those who came to his cave, when he saw the petitioners before him, replied in the negative, saying that their customs and his would not agree. Perhaps he knew by report what was their mode of life. But they pressed him so hard that the man of God yielded, hoping, perhaps, to bring them to better ways. Having taken him with them to their monastery, no long time passed before the reason of his refusal became evident. The Saint, who was a rigid guardian of monastic rule, put such restrictions on them as not to allow them to transgress the bounds of good discipline and give themselves up to disorderly life. Whereupon they, casting upon one another the blame of the foolish design of placing themselves under so severe an Abbot, chafed under the rein. The prohibition of what was unlawful, the good example of their Superior, which is always a thorn in the heart of the sad, and the bitterness of giving up old habits, spurred on some of them to the desperate design of poisoning him whom, with such earnest pleadings, they had induced to put himself at their head. The wicked design was deliberately adopted by all, and they all shared in poisoning the cup which one day they presented to the Saint to be blessed. But, when the monk who was the bearer of the poisoned beverage appeared in the refectory, and the Saint raised his hand to bless it, according to his custom, the Sign of the Cross was like a stone hurled at it, which broke the cup in pieces, for, as St Gregory says, the vessel, which was the bearer of death, could not bear the sign of life.[1] The man of God, thus clearly convinced of the bad dispositions of those monks, at once arose, and, with a meek and tranquil countenance, calling them together, said: "May God pardon

[1] ". . . quia potum mortis habuerat, quod portare non potuit signum vitæ."—Dialog., Lib. ii. cap. 3.

you, brethren, but why have you plotted this wicked thing against me? Did I not tell you before, that my customs would not accord with yours? Go and find an Abbot according to your taste, for after this deed you can keep me no longer amongst you." By these words he showed that, since they were all accomplices in this crime, he could do no more good among them. He therefore returned to his beloved solitude, to dwell with himself under the eyes of God.

Whoever reads the first chapter of the *Rule* of St Benedict, in which he speaks of various kinds of monks, will find mention of some whom he calls a pestilential race, *genus teterrimum*;[1] the monks of Vicovaro were of this class. In those times, monks were not yet disciplined under a stable form of government. Local customs, the various ordinances of Abbots, private fancies, were not sufficient restraints to prevent those falls, which are not arrested half way. The best, if they fall, become the worst. Those of Vicovaro descended even to poison. Why, therefore, corrupted as they were, they should turn to St Benedict and persuade him to be their Abbot, I have not seen explained. It is certain they knew who he was, and that with him no compromise was possible. I think they were actuated by avarice. To draw the Saint into their monastery was telling the faithful that they should come to them if they had any gifts to offer to the Lord. They had scented afar off the pious oblations at the Holy Grotto!

[1] Cap. 1.

CHAPTER III.

1. He goes forth from the cave, and how he is venerated—2. St Francis and the Rose of the Grotto—3. Petrarch, Pius II. and Silvius Antonianus—4. The statue of St Benedict—5. He founds twelve monasteries and governs them—6. The Roman nobles Tertullus and Equitius at Subiaco—7. Who they were—8. They offer to St Benedict their sons Maurus and Placid—9. How he educated them—10. The slothful monk—11. The water gushing forth at the prayer of the Saint—12. The monk who was a Goth—13. The obedience of Maurus, who walks on the waters of the lake—14. The priest Florentius who wishes to kill the Saint by poison, and by means of women to corrupt the monks—15. St Benedict's raven—16. He prepares to change his place of abode—17. Bad death of Florentius.

1 VERY different was the disposition of those who, after this event, went and placed themselves under his direction, to become true monks. They were attracted, not by the love of earthly things, but by the Saint's virtue. He, recognising in their numbers and in the earnestness of their faith, the Will of God, went forth from his solitude and undertook the task of guiding men along the path of Evangelical Perfection. He left his beloved cave; but it did not remain deserted. To the hermit there has succeeded, even down to our own times, the concourse of the faithful to this Benedictine Bethlehem. The whole history of the Order of St Benedict, which first began to bloom amid those rocks, has always attracted there the minds of the faithful and of philosophers, to meditate on the fecundity and the omnipotence of the Evangelical Counsels, during certain gloomy times in the social life of peoples.

2. Wadding, the annalist of the Friars Minor, relates that St Francis, when on his way to the territory of Naples, visited, with much fervour of devotion, the Holy Grotto, and that he changed, by his blessing, the brambles in which St

Benedict's body had been punished, into a rose plot, which flourishes unto our own days.[1]

The memory of his visit yet lives in the Chapel dedicated to the Angels and St Gregory, in which is seen a painting of the poor man of Assisi, holding a scroll with those words, which were his greeting in every house that he entered, *Pax huic domui.* It seems that St Benedict reciprocated the salutation, when the Abbot of St Peter's of Assisi, with another scroll, gave him the *Portiuncula*,[2] and the Abbot of Monte Cassino, Landolfus, in 1231, gave to Fra Leonardo, one of the first disciples of St Francis, five years after the

[1] "Sacellum hoc supereminet illi hortulo seu viridario, in quo SS. Benedictus molestum carnis incitamentum spinarum cruento superavit volutabro. Digne autem sanctæ rei contemplatione Franciscus immersus, sanctitatem et insignem magni secum expendens Patriarchæ, qui tam duro et diro sibi succurrit remedio, dumeta attrectans et exosculans, demum signo crucis afficiens, in rosarium pulcherrimum divina vertit virtute. Quo factum est ut deinceps ille locus in majori haberetur reverentia, et rosetum utriusque Patriarchæ religione sacratum, miræ virtutis rosas producat; quæ multam ubique infirmitatum medelam attulerunt. Cælestem hanc metamorphosim perbelle et docte quidam eruditus Poeta, hoc carmine depinxit:

Virgineum sepit florem Benedictus acutis
Vepribus, et proprii rosa cruoris alit.
Hinc dumeta novas, tanto fæcunda liquore,
Franciscique manu culta tulere rosas.
Falsa quidem roseo cecinere e germine Vates,
Sed latuit falso carmine vera fides.
Scire cupis rosei flos exeat unde pudoris?
Sola rosas potuit gignere puncta Venus."

—Wadding, anno 1222, tom. i.

[2] "Patribus autem Benedictinis semper summa habenda est gratia, qui humilis sodalitii primitias tam sacro donarunt loco, et cætera capessenda Monasteria hoc Dei habitaculo, tamquam ad paupertatis formam, et ad sanctitatis germen vere sacrarunt. Locum sæpius ipse vivens laudavit, et moriens ferventer fratribus commendavit. Quotannis tamen, ut suum non esse, sed ex alieno possedisse beneficio ostenderet, gratumque se exhiberet in beneficos, fiscellam leuciscorum, quod pisciculorum, seu mugilum fluvialium genus est, Italis *lasche*, quibus vicinum Asius, seu Chiatium flumen abundat, ad monachos, veluti in censum dari curabat. Illi quam devote spontaneum pauperum tributum, alio quocumque suorum reddituum æstimabilius judicantes, et pari cum eis amore contendentes, reddebant lecythum olei in pauperum fratrum obsonii condimentum."

—Annal, 1210, tom. I., p. 90, n. 30.

Saint's death, a plot of ground in S. Germano to build one of the most ancient convents of his Order.[1]

3. Pope Pius II., Piccolomini, according to the Subiaco tradition, when he was at that monastery, visited the Grotto with such veneration that he went about kissing every place which was said to have touched the body of St Benedict. The poet Silvius Antonianus, a facile Latin versifier in the sixteenth century, could not restrain his muse from leaving there a poetical flower, which I have gathered and placed at the foot of the page.[2] And the same Petrarch, whose soul had poured itself out in highly-wrought descriptions of his love for Laura, when he visited the Holy Grotto, attuning his mind to holy thoughts, declared that whoever sees it, "believes that he sees in some manner the threshold of Paradise."[3] And, indeed, I find that the most illustrious Benedictines of the past century, in the evening of life, were accustomed to make a retreat before death in the little monastery of the Holy Grotto, in order to strengthen their spirit on that spot, lest it should falter on the threshold of eternal rest.

[1] Regestum Angeli de Posta, MS. Bibl. Cassin. p. 30.

[2] Hæften, p. 72.

Prærupta saxa et invia,
Cælo minantes horridæ
Rupes, ferarum inhospita
Et alitum cubilia!

Ut lætus, et libens diu
Optata conspicio loca,
Humique stratus, spiritu,
Bis terque sancta exosculor.

Ignotus hic et abditus,
Athleta Christi nobilis,
Serpente cum sævissimo,
Miranda gessit prœlia.

Attritus hisce cautibus,
Spinis cruentus asperis
Benedictus in terra jacens,
Cœli pererrabat choros.

Tandem velut sol aureus
Surgit marino ab oequore,
Hinc sol novus clarissimo
Complevit orbem lumine.

Sublimis O vitæ, et viæ
Dux, et magister optime
E summo Olympi vertice
Audi precantem Sylvium.

[3] "Vicit tamen carnales affectus animæ cura, petiit felix puer, non modo solitudinem, sed desertum, et illud immane, sed devotum specus, quod qui viderunt, vidisse quodammodo paradisi limen credunt."

De vita solitaria, lib. ii. cap. ix.—"De S. Benedicto singulari ac devotissimo solitudinis habitatore."

4. When I visited the monastery, which was a true museum of Christian painting before the revival of the arts, and the Holy Grotto, I found that in 1657 there had been placed within it a white marble statue, carved by a certain Antonio Gaggi, a disciple of Bernini. It is a St Benedict as a youth, clothed in a monastic habit of modern shape, with parted flowing hair, and in the act of a contemplation, which has no wings to raise him up. The young Saint is not rapt to heaven, but, overcome with weariness, he is seated, resting himself. There were certain things which art, in the seventeenth century, could not do. I was told that the Supreme Pontiff, Pius VI., Braschi, on seeing that marble figure of St Benedict, cast himself at its feet, embraced its knees and prayed, weeping, for a long time. I wished to imitate the faith of the Pontiff, but the bare rock attracted me more than the statue. The fault was Gaggi's. Certain ideals are conceived, but not realised: the pallet and chisel that would fain make them live, kill them.

5. Besides those who, attracted by the fame of his sanctity, came to Benedict, in order that they might be made monks, there were also some who, although monks, lived dispersed among the mountains, not living under one master or one rule. Haeften cites a Bull of Alexander IV., in favour of the monastery of Subiaco, in which, referring to St Benedict, he says—"The aforementioned Saint wished to gather together in this place, as in one fold of the Lord, many and different families of holy monks, dispersed in various monasteries and regions, in order to make of them one flock, after his own heart, to strengthen them more, and bind them together by fraternal bonds in one house of the Lord, under one regular observance, and in the permanent worship of the name of God." [1]

Therefore St Benedict set himself to govern these monks with the intention, long deliberated upon, of reducing the monastic codex to unity, and of establishing, in the West, one only Religious Order, thus putting an end both to the

[1] Haeften, p. 86.

arbitrary, unreasonable government of superiors, and to the license of subjects. Hence he gathered together all those monks, who would accept him as their master, into twelve small monasteries,[1] in each of which he placed twelve monks, with a prior, or præpositus, at their head, and of this whole family of 156 brethren he himself retained the supreme direction. He fixed his abode in the monastery of St Clement, with a few monks whom he wished to bring up with special care in the spiritual life. Perhaps they were those whom he chose for the government and propagation of his Order; and St Gregory says that he ruled these monks with most holy laws, making, as yet, no mention of his own Rule. This silence permits me to make a conjecture, without presuming to impose my fallible opinion on others. Perhaps in that sudden concourse of monastic candidates, St Benedict placed them under St Basil's Rule, for in the last chapter of his own *Rule* he calls St Basil *our holy Father*, which is a sign that, in the beginning, he had followed his statutes. Indeed, Mabillon[2] affirms that, after St Basil's Rule was translated into Latin by the priest Rufinus of Aquileia, the Italian monks followed it in preference to any other. Mirzio, in his *Cronaca Sublacense*, says that St Benedict wrote his *Rule* at Subiaco, forgetting the verses which he discovered in a very ancient manuscript at Subiaco, and which state that the monks of the twelve monasteries were taught the religious life, not by following any written rule, but only by following the example of St Benedict's deeds.[3] And in order to demonstrate the truth of his view, he affirms elsewhere that its propagation began from

[1] Arnold Wion gives the following as the names of the twelve first monasteries founded by St Benedict :—

1. S. Marina in Primerana, hodie S. Laurentius.
2. Vita Aeterna.
3. S. Michael Archangelus.
4. Archangelus.
5. S. Angelus.
6. S. Angelus de Threni.
7. S. Johannes Baptista.
8. S. Clemens Papa.
9. S. Blasius, hodie S. Romanus.
10. S. Donatus.
11. SS. Cosmas et Damianus, hodie S. Scholastica.
12. S. Hieronymus.

[2] Acta SS. O. S. B. Præf., p. 11.

[3] "Vivendi quos ipse modum faciendo docebat."

Subiaco, adducing the fact that St Turibius made it known in Spain, before St Benedict left the Subiaco monasteries. But his annotator, Joseph Macarty,[1] and Mabillon, with arguments of sound criticism,[2] show the falsity of his opinion. The fact of St Benedict having governed monasteries at Subiaco easily gave origin to the traditions of the place—viz., that he wrote his *Rule* there. But in the process of our work, the reader will find that it was really written at Monte Cassino, where he founded the Order of which he was Father, and from which went forth the first propagators of the *Rule*, Maurus and Placid, the one into France, the other into Sicily. This does not rob the monks of Subiaco of the Saint's having conceived there the principal idea of the *Rule*, and of having there matured it by the experimental government of the twelve monasteries. It appears to me, that this is precisely shown by St Benedict choosing for himself an abode separate from the others, in which he gathered together, and educated with greater care, certain monks, who were to be living embodiments of the great idea of the Order which he was to found. This monastery arose on the side of that mountain on which, to-day, that of St Scholastica stands, on a certain little hill on the border of the lake, and at the spot where that bridge had its beginning, which Nero, or Claudius, constructed to join the two banks, as the Subiaco chronicle tells us. I do not know if any stone yet remains of that monastery in which St Benedict performed those miracles which we shall have to relate, for such a thing would be a very precious treasure that would remind us of such a holy place as the Subiaco cave. It was there that St Benedict sowed the seed of his Order in the persons of those few monks, whom he kept apart with himself, to educate, and who followed him to Monte Cassino.[3]. The Order did not take its origin from those twelve monasteries which St Benedict organised, but from the monastery of St Clement. From

[1] *C.*, p. 670. "Si adhuc inter vivos ageret Mirtius, ab hujusmodi sententia eum discessurum Arbitror."

[2] Acta SS. O. S. B., tom. i. p. 188.

[3] Mirzio, cap. iv. et v.

SANTA SCHOLASTICA, SUBIACO.

that seed-plot of more perfect men, came forth the Subiaco stem, from which bloomed the Cassinese flower of the Benedictine Rule. As I am free to expound my own view, so I leave everyone else free to embrace a different one.

6. The fame of the wonders, done by Benedict among the mountains of Subiaco, travelled to Rome, and such was the high idea conceived of his sanctity, especially among the patrician class, that many went to see him and put themselves under his guidance. Among these were two noble persons, Equitius and Tertullus, who came to offer to St Benedict their sons—the one Placid, a young child of seven years of age, the other a youth, by name Maurus, called by St Gregory, buds of bright hope.[1] Tertullus was honoured with the dignity of patrician, which was next to that of the Emperor. This was instituted by the Emperor Constantine; and of how exalted a nature it was, the reader can gather from the words with which a person was invested with it—"The administration of the office committed to us by God seems to us too laborious, therefore we appoint you our coadjutor, and grant you this honour, in order that you may render justice to the churches and to the poor, and that you may afterwards give an account of them to the Most High Judge." The Emperor clothed him with a mantle, placed a ring on his right forefinger, and gave him a paper with these words, written by the Emperor's hand—"Be thou a merciful and just Patrician." And he finally crowned him with a crown of gold.[2] These patricians, who were men

[1] "Bonæ spei soboles."

[2] Du Cange on the word *Patriciatus*. "Extat hæc forma constituendi Patricii, in Historia Pauli Foroiuliani de Gestis Longob. asservata in Bibliotheca Vaticana: —Patricii dignitas taliter disponenda est, quatenus illa non vili personæ, nec alicui concedatur ignoto. Sit enim valde notus Imperatori, sit fidelis et prudens, non elatus. Protospatharius veniens ante Imperatorem, osculetur suum humerum, et dicat: Maxime Imperatorum, adest quem vocasti. Tunc stet ad sinistram Imperatoris illius Hyparchus, quem nos dicimus præfectum, et dicat ei Imperator: cum Protospathario futurum Patricium adducito. Dum autem venerit Patricius, in primis osculetur pedes Imperatoris, deinde genu, ad extremum osculetur ipsum; tunc osculetur omnes Romanos circumstantes, et dicant omnes, Beneveniatis: Nobis nimium laboriosum esse videtur concessum nobis a Deo minis-

distinguished by nobility of blood, by wealth and integrity of faith, were appointed by the Emperors to hold their place in the western provinces that were subject to them. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that the author of the *Life of St Placid* should so much exalt Tertullus, the Saint's father. This writer states that Tertullus was of the family of the Anicii, and was a man of such great virtue, that he had merited from the Emperor and the Roman people the title of Father of his country. And here I wish to notice a matter, not remarked before by others, which shows that the statement of the hagiographer, regarding Tertullus's relationship to the family of the Anicii, is not a rhetorical amplification. I have placed, at the foot of the page, an inscription, which, even from the year 100 of the Christian era, shows what relationship existed between the Tertulli and Anicii, according to the opinion which I obtained from my illustrious friend, G. B. De Rossi.[1] Tertullus had taken a spouse from the Octavia

terium solum procurare: quocirca te nobis adjutorem facimus, et hunc honorem tibi concedimus, ut Ecclesiis Dei et pauperibus legem facias, et inde apud Altissimum Judicem rationem reddas. Tunc induat eum Imperator mantum, et ponat ei in dextero indice annulum, et det ei bombacinum propria manu scriptum, ubi taliter contineatur scriptum: Esto Patricius, misericors et justus. Tunc ponat ei in caput aureum circulum, et dimittat."—See Baronius's Notes on the Roman Martyrology for 27th August.

[1] C . IVLIO . P . F . HOR . . .
. . . . . TER . . . T . . VI
COS . PROCONSVLI . PROVINCI . . .
PROCONSVLI . PROVINCIAE NARBO
LEGATO . PROPRAETORE . DIVI . TRAIAINI
PROVINCIAE . . PONTI . . ET . BITH . . .
EIVSDEM . LEGATO . PROPR . . .
PROVINCIAE . AQVITANI . . . C . NSV . . .
ACCIPIENDORVM . CV . TO . . .
AEMILIAE . . ET CIRENARVM . . A . . E . .
INTER . PRAETORIOS . A . DIVIS . VES . . . . .
ET . TITO . CENSORIBVS . AEDILI . CE . . .
QVAESTORI . VRBANO
EX . TESTAMENTO
C . IVLIVS . PL . ANICIVS VARVS . . . . . .

These are the words of De Rossi:

"This inscription is from Labicus, near Rome (Corpus inscr. Latin., xiv. *n.* 925). It is dedicated to C . IVLIO . P . F . HOR [atio tribu] CORNVTO . TER-

family, a flower of virtue and beauty, and from this good tree there came forth good fruits. The first of these was Placid, the second Eutychius, the third Victorinus, and the last a daughter called Flavia, because she was a descendant of the Octavii and the Flavii. These children the illustrious Patrician brought up, by setting them the example of good deeds done for the love of God and his neighbour, for he was wholly given up to attending the services of the Church and to the practice of religion. When he came to Subiaco, clothed in the robes and insignia of his high office, he did not hesitate to throw himself at the feet of St Benedict, and besought him, with tears, that he would intercede with God for the forgiveness of his sins. In the conversations which he afterwards had with the Saint, who, as we shall soon see, drew persons to himself from a distance by the sweetness and holiness of his words, Patricius conceived such admiration for the Saint's teaching, that he offered him his first-begotten son Placid, that, under his guidance, he might become a monk.[1]

7. Who Equitius was, we do not know. St Gregory places him among the noble and religious magnates that went to St Benedict. Faustus speaks of him as belonging to a senatorial family, and married to a lady of the most noble race of the Julii. His son Maurus, a youth, was already so advanced in the exercise of Christian virtue, and of such

TVLLO. The dedicator, according to Borghesi (Œuvres complètes, tom. iv. p. 117), makes IVLIVS P . F. (Borghesi thus corrects) ANICIVS . VARVS . CORNVTVS the brother. Pliny the younger says that Cornutus Tertullus was his colleague in the consulship (ann. 100). If it is true (as it appears) that an Anicius was the brother of Cornutus Tertullus, consul in the year 100, there must have been even from that time a relationship of affinity, or some other tie, between the Anicii and the Julii Tertulli."

In the chronograph of the year 354 (Mon., "Germ. Hist.," 1891) in the year 340 there is found a Junius Tertullus, vicar of the Prefect of Rome. "Fabius Titianus Præfectus Urbis ex die iii. Non. Maias in iiii. idus Jun. Junius Tertullus vicarius cognovit, eo quod ad Augustum profectus est, postea reversus Fabius Titianus Præfectus urbis." In the Roman Synod held by Pope Symmachus in the year 499, there is found subscribed a Tertullus deacon of the fourth region, of the same date as the one mentioned.

[1] "Vita et passio Sancti Placidi martyris."—Act., SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 44.

purity of manners, that, in a short time, he arrived at the height of perfection in spiritual things. On him St Benedict lavished all his love and care, so that, in the spiritual generation of his children, he was his first-begotten. In the government of the Subiaco monasteries, he divided with him the burden of the Abbatial office, and had him as a co-operator in the power of miracles; therefore, when he wished to inflame the minds of his monks with love of the divine service by some example, he used sometimes to say, alluding to, without naming him—"We have seen in our days a certain youth of a noble race, who, whilst yet very young, attained to the perfection of the monastic life, and was considered not only like, but equal to, the most advanced."[1]

Placid and Maurus were, then, the first propagators of the Order of St Benedict, one in Sicily, the other in France, and both Romans. The oblation of Tertullus and Equitius, which, to the eyes of the rationalist, is nothing more than an act of weak superstition, appears to me, in reference to the mission of St Benedict, as it has been expounded in the first chapter, to be an historical proof of it. St Benedict himself was Roman, the work of civilising the human community was Roman, and Roman also were to be the first co-operators in that work. That concourse of Roman nobles to Subiaco was, as it were, a delegation from Rome, already emancipated by Visigoths, Vandals, Heruli and Ostrogoths, to the Father of Western monachism, because it wished to open in the future a refuge, in its warm heart, for the Evangelical Counsels. And this was symbolised by those two young boys whom it offered to him, as to their adopted father. Hence the holy Cassinese Abbot Bertarius, in the ninth century, as if present at this pious oblation, addresses, in his poem, these words to St Benedict—"Receive, O holy Father, the youths, whom Rome's glory, with pious affection, has sent to thy abode."[2]

[1] Vita S. Mauri, Act. SS. O. S. B., tom. i. p. 264.

[2] "Suscipe, sancte Pater, pueros, quos gloria Romæ
Ad tua transmisit limina, mente pia."
—Act. SS. O. S. B., tom. i. p. 27.

8. The fact of the oblation of these two boys, shows the origin of the Benedictine scholars, who have always flourished in the monasteries, and from whose numbers have come forth men, remarkable for piety and learning. Faustus,[1] a disciple of the Saint, narrates, regarding himself, that he was offered by his parents, at Monte Cassino, to St Benedict, to be educated for the divine service, at the age of seven years, according to the prescription of the Rule of the Order. St Boniface, the great Apostle of Germany, Rabanus Maurus, Bede, and, in later times, St Thomas Aquinas, entered, as boys, into the monastery. The latter was offered by his parents, not for the sake of studies, but to become a monk.[2] Not only the rich and noble, but also poor boys were received by St Benedict, since we read, in his Rule,[3] of the manner in which they were received, and how the boys were to be governed, whether they were noble or poor.

9. The words of Faustus, *earius dilexit, et instruxit*, by which he points out the special love and care which he lavished on the education of Maurus, show how the Saint, wishing to share with him the office of governing, revealed to him more clearly the designs which he had in the foundation of his Order, and the singular power of miracles which God had given him for the accomplishment of this work. St Benedict was not a legislator who used arguments to persuade men to pursue an earthly end ; he wished to lead to the heights of Evangelical Perfection. Wherefore prayer, which unites us to Christ, was to be the daily spiritual food of his monks. Besides the Canonical Psalmody which he prescribed in his Rule, and which he calls the Work of God (Opus Dei), there was another prayer, which the monks made in common, and which was very short[4]—perhaps mental prayer.

[1] Vita S. Mauri, ibi.

[2] In the process of the canonisation of this doctor, we read that the reason of his being offered was worldly and ambitious on the part of his parents: *Ut ad prælaturas illius loci venire posset*, that is, that he might one day become Abbot of Monte Cassino, who was chosen by the congregation of monks. St Thomas, therefore, was at one time a true Benedictine monk.

[3] Cap. lix.

[4] "Omnino brevietur oratio."—Reg. cap. xx.

10. Now it happened that, in one of the monasteries, a certain monk, overcome by sloth, when the rest of the brethren began to pray, did not put restraint upon himself to remain, but, going out of the Oratory, went about here and there, doing other things. The Abbot, whose name was Pompeianus, having often admonished him in vain, brought him to the man of God, who rebuked him sharply for his pride. For two days, he appeared to be improved, but, on the third day, he returned to his bad habit. The Saint, having been informed of it, said—"I will see for myself, and put him to the test." He did so, and whilst the brethren were praying, he saw a black boy lead out the unhappy monk by the hem of his garment. Then he said to the Abbot, and to Maurus—"Do you not see who takes out that monk?" "No," they both replied. "Let us then pray," he said, "that you may be able to see it." At the end of two days, the vision was granted to Maurus only. The next day, when the incorrigible monk was found wandering about, he went near him, and struck him with his rod. He was liberated from the black tempter, who, put to flight by the chastisement of the rod, returned not, to lead him away from prayer. This was a symbolical teaching given to Maurus, to show him how terrible to the spirit of darkness is the common monastic prayer, and how grave an office would be imposed upon him in the future, as the corrector of monks, and as one whose duty would be to keep them attentive and persevering in the duty of prayer, the daily bread of the robust soldiers of Christian perfection.

11. St Benedict wished the tender young child Placid thus to be a witness of the power of miracles which he had received from God, in order to accustom him, by degrees, to confidence in God during the severe training of the monastic life. Three of the twelve monasteries, existing in the same region, which he had built on the arid rocks of a mountain, had not a drop of water to quench the thirst of the brethren, who were engaged all day in descending and ascending to procure water from the lake which was at the bottom of the valley; and their life was being passed on the steep side of

the mountain. Wherefore, having taken counsel, they came to the Saint, and said—"This going down to the lake every day for water, is getting beyond our strength; place our monasteries lower down." The man of God, having comforted them with sweet words, as was his wont, gently dismissed them without anything further. In the depths of the following night, taking by the hand the dear little boy Placid,[1] he led him to the summit of the rock, on which the three monasteries were built, and there, unseen by anyone, prayed for a long time. Whoever had seen that little angel of a monk, with his hands lifted up to heaven, in the deep silence of night, by the side of that Venerable Master of holy life, would perhaps have tasted the delights of that divine dew, which was nourishing and preparing, in that infant heart, an athlete of the faith—the first martyr of the Benedictine family. Having risen from prayer, he did nothing more than place, in the same spot, three stones, one upon another, and then return to his monastery. The next day, the monks came to him, and, when they began their old complaint about the water, the Saint said to them—"Go up, and where you shall find three stones, placed one upon another, make a small hole in the rock, for the Almighty God can cause the water to burst out from the top of the mountain, and thus relieve you of your long journey." They did so, and a small hole being made in the rock, a spring of water immediately gushed forth, and, in such abundance, as to run down in a stream, which was to be seen even in St Gregory's time.[2]

These supernatural deeds, and the power which the Saint's prayers had with God, rendered all those monks docile to the teachings which he was afterwards to commit to writing, in his *Rule*, on Monte Cassino. Thus also Haeften thinks.[3] And although he, as a Roman, was in the condition of the conquered, to the eye of the Barbarians, yet he strove, with

[1] "Parvo puerulo Placido."

[2] "Quæ tam sufficienter emanavit, ut nunc usque ubertim defluat."—Dialog., cap. ii.

[3] ". . . iisdem proinde vivebant moribus et legibus in Sublacensibus monasteriis, quæ postea in Casino S. Pater scripto commisit."

especial love, to enrol the terrible conquerors as citizens in the kingdom of his Order, remembering the words of St Paul to the Romans,[1] that there must be no distinction between Greek and Hebrew, for there was one Lord of all.

12. After St Gregory has narrated the coming to Subiaco of the Roman nobles, the offerers of much wealth, he pictures to us a poor Goth, poor also in spirit, that is, yet untutored in his native rudeness, going to the Saint and asking him for what he himself one day had asked from the monk Romanus —viz., the garb of conversion, that is, the monastic habit. The man of God did not question him regarding his birth, or his knowledge, or his possessions; he had faith and an arm to work—this was sufficient to be a monk of St Benedict. Therefore St Benedict received him with joy; indeed, the word *lubentissime*, used by St Gregory, gives us to understand that he received him even with greater joy than he showed in the reception of the Roman nobles, because the Evangelical seed falling into the hearts of those Northmen, would produce greater fruit than in the old and corrupt Romans. And he soon sent him to labour in the fields, putting into his hands a hedge-hook, that he might clear away the thorns from a sloping piece of ground near the lake, which he wanted to turn into a garden. The Goth set to work with little judgment, so that when he struck into the midst of the brambles, the head left the handle and fell into the lake, so that it could be neither seen nor recovered. Then he went trembling, and cast himself at the feet of Maurus, confessing his fault, and doing penance.[2] Having heard of it, Benedict took the culprit with him to the lake, and putting the handle into the water, the head came up miraculously from the bottom, and fastened itself on. Then, giving it to the Goth, he said—"Here now, go back to thy work, and be sad no more." As the monks have to be workmen, it is easy to spoil or destroy some of the tools. The

[1] Cap. x.

[2] ". . . Itaque ferro perdito tremebundus ad Maurum monachum cucurrit Gothus, damnum quod fecerat nunciavit, et reatus sui egit pœnitentiam."—Dialog., cap. vi.

Goth's incident inspired St Benedict with a statute of his *Rule*, which is a gem of justice and charity, by which it is ordained, that if a monk shall be working in any part of the monastery, and shall injure or destroy any tool, and shall not immediately go and confess his fault to the Abbot, or the community, before it is otherwise known, let him have a more severe chastisement. If the fault be a secret one, let him manifest it to the Abbot alone, or to the spiritual seniors, who know how to cure their own sins and those of others, without making them public.[1]

13. All those regenerated by baptism are Christians, and, because they are believers, they have submitted their intellects to the yoke of the Evangelical Precepts; but not all Christians are followers of Christ. To follow Him is to imitate Him, and, as Christ said, to deny oneself. This act of abnegation is an heroic substitution of the Will of God for one's own; it is the slaying of the old man of sin, and a return to the new man, who is innocent through the merit of expiation. In Christ there was obedience even unto death; but the bloody path which was traced out on the earth by the Cross, which He carried on His way up to Golgotha, was not the way for all, but for those few who, being by a special grace of God free and earnest of purpose, give themselves to aiming at perfection of life. To gather such together, to restrain them by laws, to sustain them by his own example, in retreats far away from human concourse, was the work of St Benedict throughout the whole of the West. And let the reader take notice, that that abnegation and obedience was never the emasculation of the human individual. By this spirit, there was excited among the faithful of the first ages of the Church, that intense desire to die a joyful martyr's death at the stake, and to encounter the wild beasts in the amphitheatre; by it, in the civil order, the rights of national families were strengthened; and, as divine things, there were, sealed with the blood of other martyrs, like a commentary by the side of the symbol of Faith, the rights of family and country.

[1] Reg., cap. xlvi.

The Saint wished to give a splendid testimony to this virtue of obedience by a miracle which is the most beautiful of those that he wrought, but which I will not presume to give in my own words, for they would lack the grace and simplicity of St Gregory's narrative—"On a certain day, when the venerable Benedict was in his cell, the aforesaid Placid, the holy man's boy-monk, went down to the lake to draw water. Putting the pail which he had in his hand carelessly into the water, he himself slipped in, and was carried away at once by the current,[1] almost as far as an arrow's flight, into the deep part of the lake. But the man of God, shut up within the walls of his cell, knew the fact. He immediately called Maurus to him, and said—'Brother Maurus, be quick and run, for the boy who went to draw water has fallen into the lake, and the current has carried him far out.' Wonderful thing, and unheard of since St Peter the Apostle! Having asked and received a blessing, Maurus hastened down to the lake, and, thinking he was on dry land, ran on the water to the place where the boy was. Taking fast hold of him by the hair of the head, he returned. But, when he set foot on land and came to himself, he turned round to look, and saw that he had been walking on the water. He marvelled at a thing of which he did not believe himself capable, and was afraid. When he returned to the Father, he narrated in detail what had happened. The venerable Benedict did not attribute the fact to his own merits, but to obedience; and Maurus, on the contrary, affirmed that it was to be attributed to Benedict's command. In this peaceful contest of mutual humility, the boy, who had been saved, intervened as arbiter, saying—'Whilst I was being carried away by the water, I saw the Abbot's garment over my head, and this seemed to draw me out of the lake.'"[2] Thus beauti-

[1] This was not stagnant, but water of the river, which, by means of embankments, formed a lake, and then flowed on again.

[2] Dialog. 2 cap. 8:—"Quadam vero die dum idem venerabilis Benedictus in cella consisteret, prædictus Placidus puer sancti viri monachus, ad hauriendum de lacu aquam egressus est, qui vas quod tenebat in aquam incaute submittens, ipse quoque cadendo secutus est. Quem mox unda rapuit, et pæne ad unius sagittæ

fully did the boy express the concurrence of a twofold virtue to save him—that of Maurus's obedience, and that of St Benedict, which was the principal one, for, if the disciple's obedience in denying himself was so great, greater yet was the merit of him, who knew how to lead his disciple on, by word and example, to the cultivation of this difficult virtue.

He who walks to-day through the Simbruina valley, where the monastery of St Scholastica stands, will not find this lake of St Gregory's narrative, but only a little shrine dedicated to St Placid, in memory of the miracle on the spot where the boy placed his foot on coming out of the water. It must be remembered that this lake was the work of the Emperor Claudius, on which, according to Pliny, between the construction of the bed of large stones and the aqueducts which carried the water to Rome, 30,000 workmen were kept continually employed for eleven years, and it cost 550,000 Sestertii.[1] In the year 539, in the Pontificate of Pope Vigilius, those aqueducts were destroyed by Vitiges, King of the Goths, and were afterwards restored by Pope Adrian I. in the year 780. The lake, however, from the year 51 down to 1305, was not injured; but, in this last year, there came, on a sudden, so great a downpour of rain, that the embankment was

cursum a terra introrsus traxit. Vir autem Dei intra cellam positus, hoc protinus agnovit, et Maurum festine vocavit, dicens: Frater Maure, curre, quia puer ille, qui ad hauriendum aquam perrexerat, in lacum cecidit, jamque eum longius unda traxit. Res mira, et, post Petrum apostolum, inusitata! Benedictione etenim postulata et percepta, ad Patris sui imperium concitus perrexit Maurus; atque usque ad eum locum quo ab unda ducebatur puer, per terram se ire existimans, super aquas cucurrit eumque per capillos tenuit, rapidoque cursu rediit. Qui mox ut terram tetigit, ad se reversus post terga respexit, et quia super aquas cucurrisset expavit, et quod præsumere non potuisset ut fieret, miratus extremuit factum. Reversus ad Patrem, rem gestam retulit. Vir autem venerabilis Benedictus hoc non suis meritis, sed obedientiæ illius deputare cæpit. At contra Maurus pro solo ejus imperio factum dicebat: seque conscium illius virtutis non esse, quam nesciens fecisset. Sed in hac humilitatis mutuæ amica contentione accessit arbiter puer qui ereptus est; nam dicebat: Ego cum ex aqua traherer, super caput meum abbatis melotem videbam, atque ipsum me ex aquis educere considerabam."

[1] Lib. xxxvi., see Subiaco Chron., chap. iv., p. 45, ed. 1885. According to the Subiaco chronicler, 13,875,000 Roman scudi, pp. 46 and 47.

not able to withstand the force of the inundation, and so both it and the lake were destroyed.[1] The lake is no longer seen, but the memory of Maurus and Placid lives on for ever, and the ground, from which through them the first flower of Benedictine obedience sprung forth, yet remains.

14. These deeds inflamed hearts more and more with the love of Jesus Christ, and the number of those increased who, abandoning a worldly life, came to submit, as St Gregory says, the neck of their heart to the sweet yoke of the Redeemer. It is certain that through the virtues of St Benedict and his monks, the heights of Subiaco became a terrestrial paradise. But, in a paradise which is of earth, that most cunning of all beasts, the serpent, is never wanting.

There was, at a neighbouring Church on the border of the lake, opposite to the monastery of St Clement, a certain priest named Florentius, a bad man, to whom the great concourse of persons who went to the monastery of St Benedict, to become monks under his Rule, was a thorn in his side, and he was filled with wicked jealousy on account of it. And, because in those days of great faith, all those monks who were aiming at perfection were considered powerful intercessors with God, many persons came and offered them lands and other gifts, *pro redemptione animæ.* And where any Abbot or monk became renowned for great sanctity, there flocked a great number of these benefactors; so that the Benedictine monasteries became rich in their very beginning, and the clerics of old-established churches saw the source of the largesses of the faithful to them, diminished. On seeing, therefore, how St Benedict became enriched, because he was holy, this priest assumed the appearance of a man wholly given to God, and strove to enter into rivalry with this Father of monks—the rigid followers of the Evangelical Counsels. But the sheep's clothing did not reach down to the tail, which was that of a wolf. Everyone saw the austere life of the monks, and

[1] Della Noce, Note on ch. vii., Vita S. B.

knew also what kind of a life was led by the priest. Florentius spent his time with his wife at home, thinking more of his earthly progeny than of preparing the flock committed to him for the kingdom of heaven. St Gregory says distinctly that his sub-deacon, whose name was also Florentius,[1] was grandson to the one of whom we are speaking. Florentius then, seeing that his wicked arts were of no avail, being also full of envy at the holy man's life and deeds, and desirous of defeating the purpose of those who flocked to him to become monks, conceived the wish to get rid of him by poison. This Byzantine medicine was much used in those times. He poisoned a loaf, and sent it to the holy man as a token of charity and peace. Blessed loaves, called *eulogia*, were used by the ancient Christians as a symbol of spiritual brotherhood, and were sent as a present to their friends.[2] The Saint received the gift, and thanked the donor; but by divine revelation he knew the mischief that was hidden in it. When the hour for his refection arrived, a crow from the neighbouring wood presented itself, as usual, to receive food from his hand. Casting the priest's loaf to it, he said—"In the name of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, take this loaf and hide it where no living soul can find it." Then the crow, with open beak and extended wings, began to wheel round and caw, as much as to say plainly that it wished to obey, but was not able to do so.[3] The holy man repeated the command many times, saying—"Take it without fear, and throw it where it cannot be found." The crow, after hesitating for a long time, took it up and flew away. After three hours, having got rid

[1] ". . . Vicinæ ecclesiæ presbyter, Florentius nomine, hujus nostri subdiaconi Florentii avus."

[2] St Paulinus in his 1st Epistle to Severus says that he sends him a loaf from Campania as *eulogia*—"Panem Campanum de cellula nostra tibi pro eulogia misimus."

He does the same to St Augustine in Epistle 41—"Panem unum, quem unanimitatis indicio misimus charitati tuæ, rogamus, accipiendo, benedicas."—See St Aug., Ep. 34.

[3] "Tunc corvus aperto ore, et expansis alis circa eundem panem cæpit discurrere atque crocitare, ac si aperte diceret obedire se velle, et tamen jussa implere non posse."

of the loaf, it returned to receive its usual food from the hand of the Saint. Seeing how anxiously the unworthy priest desired his death, the holy man grieved for him much more than for himself.

"But Florentius (it is better to follow St Gregory's narrative), not being able to take away the Master's corporeal life strove to destroy the spiritual life of his disciples. Therefore he sent into the garden of the monastery, in which St Benedict lived, seven nude young women, who joined hands and danced for a long time before their eyes, in order to excite, in their hearts, the flames of unholy desires." [1] On seeing this, the holy man, fearing lest the less advanced in spiritual things might fall into sin, and knowing that he himself was the sole occasion of all this persecution, resolved to change his abode and thus escape the envy of this wretched priest.

15. And here it is fitting to make a remark on the crow, which was accustomed to come every day to receive food from the Saint's hand. This fact might cause the reader to think, irreverently indeed, that the holy man, through a frivolous custom, wasted time in taming crows and other animals. Men like St Benedict, always intent on the love of the Creator, could not withhold their love from the things which He had created. Hence they felt themselves bound by the bonds of fraternal love with everything in God's universe. On the other hand, the irrational animals, by divine ordination, often gave their services to those holy men who, in the desert, far from human society, committed their lives into the hands of God alone. Wherefore, though defenceless and solitary, they never died from the violence of wild beasts; indeed, we find, in the Lives of the Fathers of the desert, a crow bringing bread to St Paul, the first hermit, and two lions coming forth from the depths of the solitude, to dig a grave in which St Antony might bury him. And in this

[1] " . . . Sed prædictus Florentius, quia magistri corpus necare non potuit, se ad extinguendas discipulorum animas accendit: ita ut in horto cellæ, cui Benedictus inerat, ante eorum oculos nudas septem puellas mitteret, quæ coram eis sibi invicem manus tenentes, et diutius ludentes, illorum mentem ad perversitatem libidinis inflammarent."

outpouring of love for all irrational creatures, St Francis called the birds his brethren, and even the wolf his brother.

The love, therefore, of holy men for the irrational creatures is a consequence of that which they have for God, who called them out of nothing and preserves them in life. Indeed, in that lyric outpouring of the mind to the Lord in Psalm cxlviii., David praises Him for His creative Omnipotence, and calls upon, not only men, but even the beasts, to join him in his song, and he gives the reason—"Quia ipse dixit et facta sunt, ipse mandavit et creata sunt." Add to this, in the last place, that the sin of the first man, as it separated him by rebellion from God, so did it separate from himself, by rebellion, the irrational animals, which were subject to God. Those men, who by special penance and purity have turned to God, have frequently, by extraordinary divine permission, acquired again their empire over the beasts; and these, rendered mild by the virtues of the saints, have returned to their former subjection. This I say to whoever yet believes in the truth of the Bible. I now return to my narrative.

16. Wherefore, having put all things in order in the twelve monasteries which he had built in the territory of Subiaco, and having assigned to each the number of monks and of *præpositi* to govern them, St Benedict prepared to leave the monastery which was besieged by the wicked arts of Florentius. He assembled all the Subiaco communities and took leave of them in these words—"Give ear to me, my brothers and sons, co-heirs and companions in the promises of the Eternal King. My Lord, Jesus Christ, has commanded me to go to the neighbourhood of Cassino, to destroy and bury in oblivion the worship of idols, and in this matter the Will of God must be carried out, with all care, before everything else. Moreover, you know, and that by experience, what wicked arts and snares were prepared against us by the priest Florentius, who wished to poison me, and to destroy the souls of my disciples, Placid and Maurus. For this reason, I must depart from this place, according to the saying of the Eternal King: If they shall persecute you in one city, flee

into another. Since this is so, and the command of the Lord brooks no delay, I must obey and depart. Besides this, we are under the obligation of opening a compassionate heart to all, to do good to, and help all generations of men, as was revealed to us by the Lord Jesus. You, then, remain here, and stand firm in the grace and the holy life of religion, holding for certain, that with what fervour you shall remain steadfast in the discipline of the spirit, so shall the consequent reward be in the judgment to come." [1]

According to these words of the Saint, it becomes clear that he had a commission from God, not only to beat down the idols, and gather together monks on Monte Cassino, but also to exercise the Apostolic Ministry for the good of Christian souls, and to educate civil society. He took a few monks with him as companions of his journey, and set out for Monte Cassino.

17. But when the Saint had turned his back on his dear solitude, Florentius ascended the balcony of his house, that he might see with his own eyes the departure of the monks, whom he believed he had put to flight by the lewd artifice of the dancing girls. He was holding festival and rejoicing with them, when, by the Divine Judgment, he paid the penalty of his wicked artifices, for, suddenly, the house fell down and buried him in its ruins. When this event became known to the monks who had remained, one of them, named Maurus, (not the Saint), ran with all speed after the man of God, and, overtaking him at a distance of ten miles, he began calling out behind him in joyful tones—"Come back, for the priest, thy persecutor, is dead." On hearing this, St Benedict broke out into deep lamentations over the death of his enemy, and the joy of his disciple. He imposed a penance on the latter, because he had entertained a wicked satisfaction in relating the death of Florentius.

Some think that this Maurus, who was the bearer to St Benedict of the news of the death of Florentius, was the son of Equitius, and was offered to the Saint by his father. They

[1] Vita St Placidi.

are led into this error by Faustus, who affirms it in his "Life" of St Maurus. Faustus is an authentic writer, because he was a contemporary; but his book is to be read with great caution, since it afterwards fell into the hands of Odo, abbot of Glanfeuil, and was interpolated by him; not through malice, but for a good purpose, for he states, in his epistle, that he wished to correct and polish it. But besides this, he added something of his own, making use of the words of St Gregory, who lived many years after Faustus. Odo, therefore, and not these writers, erred in interpreting the account of St Gregory.

The monk Maurus, who, on account of his perfection of life held the place of his master in the monasteries of Subiaco, and who was afterwards called Servant of God in the history of the vision of the devil that led the Abbot Pompeianus's monk from prayer, and whose sanctity was so great that he walked upon the waters of the lake, was not such an imperfect novice as to rejoice over the death of an enemy, and thus to merit a penance. It is clear that when St Gregory says *Maurus nomine*, he speaks of a monk whom he mentions for the first time. The Saint would have called him again the Servant of God.

CHAPTER IV.

1. He goes to Cassino, and why—2. His journey—3. Guest, near Alatri, of the Abbot Servandus, a deacon—4. He goes up the valley of the Liris—5. He arrives at Cassino—6. Events and monuments of this city—7. First reception and preaching of the Saint—8. Monte Cassino, a pagan sanctuary—9. The Saint goes up the mountain—10. The acropolis of Cassino—11. He shuts himself up in the Palasgic tower during Lent—12. He goes forth to put down idolatry in the Roman acropolis—13. The pillar of the idol and the altar of Apollo—14. The two Oratories of St John the Baptist and of St Martin—15. The Saint's preaching and the origin of the jurisdiction of his successors.

1. HIS persecutor Florentius being dead, it seemed as if the Saint ought to have returned whence he had departed, but he held on the way on which he had set out. This fact makes it clear, that the annoyances of the priest were not the only reason of his departure from Subiaco, but there was another on which his mind was continually bent, as upon a mature design. His having chosen a place separate from the twelve monasteries, as we have related, in which he assembled under his own eyes a chosen band of monks, whom he continued to educate with special care to perfection of life, already revealed the design he had conceived of forming a small colony, who had to be led forth beyond the region of Subiaco. I do not find, among the oblations made to him at Subiaco by Tertullus, the name of Monte Cassino. But this does not prevent the conjecture that the wealthy patrician had made to the Saint a donation, not yet committed to writing, of the land on which afterwards rose the monastery of Monte Cassino. The author of the "Life of St Placid" says, distinctly, that this was built on his property of Cassino.[1] In those times, as we have already mentioned, rich patricians were accustomed, through motives of piety, to spend their patrimony in building churches and monasteries.

[1] "... in sua possessione Casini monasterium construxit." Acta SS. O. S. B., tom. i. p. 15.

John, a patrician, with his wife, built out of their own means the Liberian Basilica to Our Lady, on the Esquiline; the Roman matron, Paula, constructed a monastery near the grotto of Bethlehem, and the patrician, Liberius, that of St Sebastian at Alatri, of which we shall speak later.

Tertullus, then, not only for motives of piety, but also through zeal for religion, gave land for the building of the monastery of Cassino, committing to St Benedict the extirpation of idolatry among the Cassinese people. It is certain that he spoke of this with the Saint, when he came to Subiaco, and that, from that day, he designed all that he afterwards carried out on Monte Cassino. St Benedict went straight there, without making any attempt to settle anywhere else; and when he arrived there, he fixed upon the spot, as in a place that belonged to him. He did not occupy it by force, for he did not go there with armed adventurers, nor by fraud, which would have awaked the claims of the lawful successor. Therefore, we must conclude, he occupied it through a free gift. And this argument is confirmed by the fact, that the Saint met with no impediment in taking possession of Monte Cassino; and, indeed, the people of the neighbourhood would otherwise have attacked him, as one who came to destroy idolatry, which had revived there.

2. Mark, the poet, a disciple of St Benedict, affirms, in his poem, that his Master went to Cassino by Divine command.[1] And thus it was always thought in later times, as by Paul the Deacon,[2] by Pope Alexander II., in his Bull in favour of the Cassinese, and by St Thomas,[3] who openly affirmed that St Benedict received from God an immediate mission to preach the faith. But the Divine commission does not exclude that of Tertullus. Haeften regrets that Baronius[4] should state that the Saint abandoned Subiaco, driven away by the envy of his brethren, or by the monks. This was an

1 "Sed jussus veniens, eremoque vocatus ab alta

. . . . . .

Ad quam tu ex alio monitus cum monte venires."

2 Hist. Longobard, lib. i. cap. xxvi. 3 Opusc. 19, cap iv. 4 Annal. 523.

error caused by the copyist, who, perhaps, for the word *Florentii* substituted *Fratrum.* On one occasion only, he had to escape from the hatred of the monks of Vicovaro.

St Gregory has told us nothing of St Benedict's journey to Monte Cassino, nor of the way that he took; he simply mentions that he took a few monks with him,[1] among whom were his dear disciples, Maurus and Placid. Mark also mentions that he was accompanied by three crows,[2] which, being used to receive food from his hands, wished to follow him and the two youths. They guided him, pointing out the way he must keep to, when it divided in two directions. Hence he says that, in the desert places, Christ had been his guide, leaving it to be understood, that these two guides were heavenly ones. And, in order to show how great was the grief felt at Subiaco at his departure, Mark, pouring himself out in elegiac verse, says—"The mountain, at his departure, was clothed with horror; it put on the paleness of its own mist; the caverns in their grief shed abundant tears, and even the dank dens wept, with their wild beasts; then, with lively grief, did the lakes bewail, and the forest scattered its dishevelled locks to the winds."[3]

[1] ". . . paucis secum monachis ablatis."—Dial. 2, c. viii.

[2] It is well that the reader should know the Cassinese legend regarding the three crows which accompanied St Benedict, as narrated by St Peter Damian, who found it at Monte Cassino in the eleventh century. "Quid autem mirum, si Angeli sanctorum videlicet hominum amatores, iter edocebant, ne vir sanctus erraret, cum et bruta animalia ejus vestigia sequerentur, ne solus abiret? Nam tres corvi per omnem viam individui sibi comites fuerunt, ejus assidue vestigia prosequentes: hodieque in silva, quæ venerabili monasterio Casini montis adjacet, duo, sive, ut ferunt, tres corvi, annua semper revolutione, nidificant, quos ab illis antiqui temporis corvis nonnulli prodire per traducem seminis asseverant. Et revera quotidie monasterii foribus advolant, ut crocitantes, et alas, ac rostra pandentes, solitam escam, velut debitum censum ex vetustæ possessionis jure deposcunt."—*Serm. in vigil. St Benedicti.* And even to the present day there is never wanting a pair of crows, which give a welcome to guests at the door of the monastery; but nothing is ever said regarding their genealogy.

[3] "Te sibi sublato tenebris mons cælitus horret,
Et pallet nebulis concolor ipse suis.
Mærent, et largis distillant fletibus antra,
Cumque suis plangunt tabida lustra feris.
Teque lacus liquidi vero flevere dolore
Et sparsit laceras silva soluta comas."

Regarding the way followed by St Benedict, in order to reach Monte Cassino, the *Cronaca Sublacense* tells us nothing, except that he descended from Subiaco to the plains of Arcinazzo; from thence he passed through the region of Torre, in which, according to the tradition of the country people, he fixed his staff in the earth, and it soon took root and grew into a tree, that finally, in memory of this fact, a convent of nuns afterwards was built, which was entirely destroyed in succeeding evil times.[1] We say nothing of the truth of these miracles; but, when oral traditions agree with the monuments of religious worship, either existing or destroyed, they always contain some particle of history. Of the above-mentioned monastery and of the church annexed to it, which was standing at the end of the seventeenth century, a few remains are yet to be seen, at a thousand paces from the place. From Torre the Saint came to Guercino, where the faithful afterwards dedicated a church to him, and which yet existed at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

3. Thence he proceeded along the small stream *Cosa*, making for the region of Alatri,[2] and, without entering the city, he ascended a mountain to the east, at four kilometres from the city, which rises 457 metres above the level of the sea. On the top of this arose the monastery of St Sebastian, which was built at the instance of the patrician Liberius a few years before, and the Abbot of which, at that time, was the deacon Servandus. It must be said that this Abbot knew, by report, of St Benedict and his deeds, because he received him with such kind hospitality, as to strengthen between them a holy friendship, of which more will be said later. Indeed, the fact of his going straight to this monastery, shows that he already knew the Abbot, and was a friend of his. There is a tradition among the Alatrini, that St Benedict, in return for Servandus's generous hospitality towards himself and his monks, gave the Abbot a bell, which, afterwards removed from the monastery of St Sebastian to Alatri,

[1] Mirzio, *Cron. Subl.*, p. 78.
[2] Vita et Passio St Placidi.—Acta SS. O. S. B., tom i., p. 50.

yet exists in the monastery of the Benedictines in that city. I interrogated, on this matter, one of the inhabitants, who was deserving of credit, and I found that the bell does not bear externally any mark or any inscription whatever, but from its archaic form, I conjectured that it really belonged to those times.

In memory of St Benedict's passing through Alatri, three churches were built in his honour; one called St Benedict's *de Plagis*, which was in a certain place in the city, yet known as *le Piagge*, and which is entirely destroyed; another, yet existing, of St Benedict's *ad Portam*, afterwards given by John V, Bishop of Alatri, to the Abbey of Subiaco; and the third called *Pizzuto*, on the summit of the mountain which hangs over the monastery of St Sebastian. In the thirteenth century this monastery was no longer inhabited by monks, but was given up to the nuns of St Clare, who remained there until 1442. In the middle of the seventeenth century, Pope Innocent X made over the monastery, church, and possessions, to that of St Agnes in Rome. Hence whoever should to-day ask for the Monastery of Servandus, where St Benedict was received so hospitably, would only be able to see a few remains under the name of St Agnes.[1]

4. From Alatri, the Saint passed through the city of Veroli,[2] thence he descended into the valley of the Liris, and entered, by the Latin Way, into the province of Campania. The aspect of this region, once so flourishing in the times of the Republic and the Roman Empire, appeared, to the eyes of St Benedict, very miserable, devastated, as it had been many times, by the Barbarians. Their irruption into Italy was a new fact in history. The wars of Brennus, Pyrrhus, of Hannibal, and others, diminished the power of the Romans, but did not destroy their courage; they rather

[1] These traditions are narrated by the famous and worthy Canon De Persiis, of Alatri, in his *Memorie del Pontificato di St Sisto I., Papa e martire*, Bk. II., ch. i. p. 177. This writer, guided by the same traditions, cites the *Atti delle Visite dei Vescovi Alatrini*, the *Memorie del Lazio*, of Father Pierantoni, which are preserved in the Archives of the Collegiate house of Treves, and the *Supplemento* to the *Cronaca Sublacense* of Mirzio.

[2] Acta St Placidi.

tempered it with fresh vigour. The war of the Barbarians was not the war of armies, but a terrible movement of peoples, who over-ran the Empire, to destroy cities, land, civil institutions, rights, traditions; in a word, their whole history was a vast attempt to annihilate, if possible, the Latin race, and substitute their own in its place. But, on the confines of nations God watches, and knows how to reunite the broken thread of their life. He alone has the key of their sepulchre, that He may open it at the fixed time, and hurl down every generation of Barbarians, by the lightning flash of an unexpected resurrection. Conscious of these Divine Designs, following the Latin Way, and leaving on the right the cities, once so flourishing, of Fregelle, Ausonia, Aquinum, Interamna Lirinate, he drew near Cassino. We may be sure that he wept at the sight of the country around Cassino, which Cicero[1] had called most excellent and fruitful. For about a century, it had been devastated by the Goths of Alaric (410), by the Vandals of Genseric (455), by the Heruli of Odoacer (476), and finally, once more, by the Goths of Theodoric (493 and 494). And since the Latin Way passed through Cassino, a free course was opened to the rush of all the Barbarians, who spread from Rome into the lower parts of Italy. Hence the inhabitants abandoned, in terror, their native settlements, and fled to the mountains, to escape the terrible torrent, and, in the most solitary recesses, founded those towns and industries, which, to-day, make the spectator wonder why men should have chosen places so impervious and difficult of approach. The abandoned fields became wild, the wandering waters became marshy, and disease preyed upon the bloodless people; all civil society was broken up by terror, manners became brutalized, and all light of science and art was extinguished.

5. When St Benedict arrived in these parts in 529, the town of Cassino had already been destroyed by the Goths thirty-five or thirty-six years before, so that it was deserted

[1] ". . . fundos, quos in agro Casinate optimos, fructuosissimos."
—Orat. De Leg. Agr., i. 25.

by its inhabitants; and it is probable, that there were yet living many who had been witnesses of the sad events of that calamity, and who narrated them to the Saint. This town, an ancient municipality and a Roman colony, of which Varro, Cicero, Livy, and others speak, was conspicuous, in the time of the Republic, for the magnificence of its edifices, the high order of its magistrates, the number of its inhabitants, the richness of its lands, and the splendour of its families, such as the Hummidii, and Rubri, and others. It was built on the side of the mountain, between the south and west, descending towards the Latin Way, and looked down, like a queen, upon the well-watered valley of the Liris. At the beginning of the sixth century, it had ceased to exist.

6. If I were to narrate its origin and its fortunes, I should wander too far from the subject which I have in hand. I will give, in the Appendix to this book, a note regarding the ancient Cassino, by a Cassinese monk called Giuseppe Macarty, who lived in the last century, which is little known and which has been lately published in the *Cronaca Sublacense* of Mirzio. The learned will be indebted to me.[1]

However, St Benedict found its monuments standing, as the fury of the Barbarians had not, perhaps, had time to demolish them. The amphitheatre, and the temple erected by Hummidia Quadratilla for the Cassinese at her own expense, the theatre, the aqueducts, the hot baths, the tombs, which, according to Roman custom, bordered the Latin Way, and perhaps a great part of the edifices which adorned the villa of Marcus Varro in the valley towards the East, were yet to be seen. Of these monuments, there remains to-day only the amphitheatre, which is, within, entirely despoiled of all decoration, and is partly buried. Perhaps the reticulated structure of the walls resisted the onset of the Barbarians of the fifth century, but the later and frequent eruptions of the Saracens, the wars between the Suevi and Angioini who fortified themselves there, and the neglect into which it fell in subsequent

[1] See Appendix B.

times, have reduced it to the state of devastation in which we see it at present. There is very little left of the theatre ; and of the temple, nothing. The latter was converted into a church by Scauniperga, wife of Gisulfus II, Duke of Beneventum, in the eighth century, and dedicated to St Peter, around which afterwards sprung up some rural cottages, which formed the village of *S. Pietro a Monastero.* Of the temple and the village, nothing now remains. Neither the destroying power of time, nor the malice of men, has been able to shake, nor overturn the edifice, composed of enormous stones without cement, which overshadows the temple, and which, if as archæologists think was a tomb, it would not be rash to conjecture belonged to the matron Hummidia and her family. Of the villa of Varro, through which the modern railway has cut its path, there only remains a poor remnant amid the brambles and thorns, to point out the place where it stood.

In those successive incursions of savage nations, how many possessors of land were there in the town of Cassino, who, descendants of the men that are mentioned in inscriptions, as fulfilling high offices in the municipality, were obliged to fly elsewhere to save life and property. And of the people, accustomed to the ease and delights of city life, to the games of the amphitheatre and the amusements of the theatre, there remained only a rustic population, which the Barbarians had driven back into their ancient Eastern suburb, where the mountain, as St Gregory says, opening its bosom, embraces their town.[1]

It is said that, in the Apostolic times, the light of the Gospel came from Rome to Cassino, and that this noblest town of extreme Latium had from St Peter its first Bishop, who exercised jurisdiction over a definite diocesan territory. The cult of the Prince of the Apostles in these parts, bears testimony to this. To him Scauniperga, as has been already said, dedi-

[1] "Castrum namque quod Casinum dicitur, in excelsi montis latere situm est, qui videlicet mons distenso sinu hoc idem castrum recipit, sed per tria millia in altum se subrigens, velut ad aera cacumen tendit."—Dialog. 2, cap. viii.

cated the church, and, in modern Cassino, the parochial church has always been sacred to that Apostle. Through the troubles of the times, the series of the Cassinese Bishops has been lost; the names of two only remain. One was Caprasius, or rather, according to the last critical edition of Thiel, Carprarius, whose name is found in a Synod held in Rome by Pope St Hilary in the Liberian basilica in 465, and who signed the Acts of this Synod with the Bishops of Aquino, Preneste, and Cuma. The other name is that of Severus, who, in the year 487, subscribed the Synod held at Rome in the Lateran by Pope Felix III.[1] Severus was the last of the Cassinese Bishops, and was afterwards honoured as a Saint. The Abbot Theobald, in the eleventh century, built a small chapel in his honour, along the way that leads up to the Abbey, in the place afterwards called *ad voltam S. Severi*, which chapel was in existence at the beginning of this century.[2] The Cassinese, having thus fallen into such depths, that they had no longer a country nor pastors to keep them within the Fold of Christ, rather through privation of every earthly good than through malice, again gave themselves up to the worship of the idols, which yet remained, standing, on the top of the mountain that rose above their homes.

Baronius wonders that in the sixth century, when idolatry was extinct throughout the whole world, it should yet have, when St Benedict arrived, deep roots among the Cassinese, through the negligence of their Bishops.[3] But, since there were no longer any Bishops there, and idolatry could not be rooted out of the Roman Empire at once, it is not to be wondered at, that there should be left in those places some remnants of the old superstitions. These are troublesome weeds. You may tear them up in one place, but their roots germinate in another, until time at last kills them. The same annalist thought it almost incredible[4] that, after so

[1] Thiel, Epist. RR. Pontif, p. 160.

[2] Petrus Diac., De ortu et obitu justorum Casin. Vita S. Severi. Chron. Casin. cap. lii.; Ughellius, Episcop. Casin., tom. i. p. 571.

[3] Ad. Ann., 529, p. 548.

[4] *Ibid.*, 496, p. 512.

many Imperial Edicts and so much vigilance on the part of the Pontiffs, 177 years before St Benedict, in Rome itself, in the time of Pope Gelasius, Christians should delight in the impure feasts of Lupercalia, and that noble senators should be the persons who resisted the zeal of the Pontiff. Either through disease or some other public calamity, and especially through Alaric's devastation of Rome, not only the common people, but persons like the older Symmacus, prefect of Rome, turned to the worship of idols, believing that the victories of the Barbarian—such as those of Rhadgasius—were chastisements from the gods of Olympus, angry because they had been abandoned.[1] If Christian senators and prefects did this in Rome, it is not surprising that the people of Cassinum, deprived of their pastor and dispersed by the fury of the invaders, should turn to pagan customs. Passing beyond the declivity of the Amphitheatre, St Benedict went down into that part of the Cassinese suburb called *Foro.*

7. I do not know what reception the Cassinese gave to St Benedict and the little monastic colony from Subiaco, which he brought amongst them; but, from what we shall relate a little later, it will become clear that his reception was kind, and that, in a short time, a paternal bond united to the heart of the Saint that poor people, who, without pastor or civil government, and terrified by the misfortunes they had endured, had wandered from the path to heaven, whence alone the consolation of hope can come to us. St Benedict, conscious of the mission which he had received from God, to bring back this people to the faith of Christ, no doubt called to mind the instructions with which the Apostles were sent forth to convert the nations. They were to be poor, to be the bearers of peace, to eat the bread of hospitality, to heal the sick, and to announce the coming among them of the kingdom of God.[2]

[1] Baron. Ad Ann., 496, p. 512.

[2] "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way. Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: Peace be to this house: and if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall return

Such were those few monks, with their master. Peace be to this house, they said, and it did not return to them rejected, but awaited them at the table of hospitality. The most splendid revelations of the Divinity of Christ and of His Sacraments, took place in the symbolical feasts at Cana of Galilee, in the house of Simon the Leper, at the Last Supper, and in the town of Emmaus. St Gregory mentions the preaching of St Benedict, and the wondrous cures that he wrought, after the destruction of idolatry and the building of Monte Cassino. But, both the one and the other were begun at his first arrival in the Cassinese settlement. What a history there is in that first meeting of St Benedict with this people! Here the great apostle of the Gospel cast the first seed into the heart of the individual; here he fostered it in the bosom of the family, by the prodigies of his charity. Here that family afterwards grew into a civil community, when, in the ninth century, the pagan *castrum* became the *civitas S. Germani*, and was gathered round the monastery of St Benedict, dedicated to Our Saviour. From this spot the seed grew into a tree, so large, as to receive into its branches the whole of Europe, civilised and sanctified by the Order of St Benedict. Beautiful and precious are the treasures, that yet record the ancient grandeur of their Roman city; but these, perishable as they are, can never equal the immortal glory of having given a cradle to modern Christian civilisation. The name of St Germanus is the blazoned symbol of the nobility of this city.

St Gregory tells us that the Saint gave himself to the conversion of the Cassinese, and of the neighbouring territories, by continual preaching—*prædicatione continua*—to show that the supreme motive of his coming into those parts, was to bring back to the faith of Christ, those souls that had strayed away into the false worship of idols. Therefore, without any

to you. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have. For the labourer is worthy of his hire. Remove not from house to house. And into what city soever you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say to them: the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke x. 4-11).

delay, on his first arrival in the land, he made a beginning of his Apostolic ministry; and did not desist from it on ascending the mountain, on whose summit the pagan divinities had their seat, until he had made Christian again that people which was to help him in the destruction of the idols and in the foundation of his first monastery. But, as the germs of ancient Christianity had not yet been killed by the tares of pagan superstitions, through the remarkable grace which shone forth in the countenance and words of the Saint, and by the wonders which he wrought, he quickly gathered around him a good number of faithful, who, venerating him as a messenger of God, and loving him as a father, were unwilling to leave him.

8. The mountain, which takes the name of Cassino from the region which is on its side, is one of those heights which descends from the chain of the Mediterranean Apennines into the valley of the Liris, and guards it like a sentry, whilst the others run towards the north to join the Aprutian mountains. To-day, wild-looking and despoiled of its woods, and white with calcareous rocks, it offers a spectacle of sadness. But the Saint found it all clad with ancient forests, sacred to the worship of devils, as St Gregory tells us,[1] and in which, even to that time, a number of foolish pagans offered sacrifices to the gods. These sacrifices were a folly; but to have preserved those woods, for which the pagans had so great a regard, was a work of hygiene, which the Christians of these times, without so many gods and sacrifices, would do well to imitate. To denude the mountains is to let the rains rush down to their base, and there cause marshes and pestilences. The road which leads from east to west, winding along the sides of the mountain, and for three miles bordering its summit, was the same by which, to our own days, the ascent was made on horseback, and which was afterwards paved differently, and in some parts followed a different direction. By that path, as St Gregory tells us, the foolish country

[1] "Circumquaque etiam in cultu dæmonum luci succreverant."
—Dialog., cap. viii.

people ascended, in order to offer their sacrifices at the ancient *Fanum*, which was dedicated to Apollo. This temple arose on the highest crest, on the site of the ancient Acropolis of the city of Cassino. St Gregory speaks only of Apollo ; but the monk Mark, in his poem, relates that the blinded crowd venerated there profane images, and held, as gods, sculptured idols ; that they built these temples and altars, on which they offered bloody sacrifices ; that they called the place *Arx*, and had consecrated it to gods of stone. The best name for it, he says, would have been Infernal Chaos.[1] The whole mountain was, then, consecrated to idols, and was, as it were, a pagan Pantheon.

9. When St Benedict arrived at half a kilometre from the summit of the mountain, he paused at a place where a rising crest of rock, on the right, formed a little valley. This rock is called, to our own times, *Monte Venere*, perhaps from some altar which had been dedicated to Venus. In the year 1820 this little valley was covered with a wood of old oaks and beech-trees, tardy off-shoots of some pagan grove. In a few days these trees were cut down by the Neapolitan troops, to construct military defences against the Austrians. But some yet remain, as venerable relics, on the side of the ancient road.

In this place, for the first time, the neighbouring turreted walls of the Acropolis came before the Saint's view; he paused for a time, and, kneeling down, prayed that God would support him in his difficult Apostolate. "For," says St Gregory, "the holy man, in going to another part of the

[1] "Cæca profanatas coleret dum turba figuras,
Et manibus factos crederet esse deos ;
Templa ruinosis hic o im struxerat aris,
Queis dabat obsceno sacra cruenta Jovi.
. . . . . .
Hunc plebs stulta locum quondam vocitaverat Arcem,
Marmoreisque sacrum fecerat esse deis.
Quod tunc si vero signasset nomine quisquam,
Tartareum potuit jure vocare Chaos :
Ad quem cæcatis errantes mentibus ibant,
Improba mortifero reddere vota Jovi."

country, changed place, indeed, but not his enemy, because he had afterwards to bear greater struggles, as he found the author of evil in open war against him."[1] There is an ancient tradition that, when the Saint rose from prayer, he left the impression of his knees in the rock, and this is pointed out to the pious pilgrim by a cross, and by the name *Ginocchio* which the place bears. Of these supernatural impressions in the living rock perhaps the reader will have different views of his own; and if, instead of believing, he wishes to argue and to persuade himself that they were the work of the chisel, he may congratulate himself on his talent. These are not Scriptural miracles, nor are they certified by the authority of the Church. But the thing, even thus viewed, is worthy of veneration from the fact that it happened in those times, and that some hand transmitted it to the memory of posterity by that rough mark. To-day stones are built up together and statues raised in memory of deeds and men; in those times scarcely a mark is made upon the rocks. These things I say to whoever does not wish to believe; to me and to those who think with me, that impression of a knee is worthy of veneration for a two-fold reason—historical and religious.

10. Before placing St Benedict, in my narrative, within this fortress of paganism, I must describe it to the reader, as far as is possible, after such a long course of centuries and so many vicissitudes of fortune.

At the time when St Benedict arrived there, the top of the mountain was crowned with walls and towers, such as the ancients were accustomed to build, as bulwarks and defences for the great Greek and Latin cities which they governed. From the tower, which commanded the ingress to the Keep, which was square in form, afterwards inhabited by St Benedict, and which, in part, exists to this day, there ran from East to West the southern wall, defended by towers, perhaps smaller than the one first mentioned. No other any longer

[1] "Sanctus vir ad alia demigrans, locum non hostem mutavit; nam tanto post graviora prælia pertulit, quanto contra se aperte pugnantem ipsum Magistrum malitiæ invenit."—Dialog., cap. viii.

exists; but how many there were is clear from the number of cisterns made at their base, which received the rain-water from the roofs for the use of the indwellers, and which are yet to be seen. There are five of these on the South side. On the East there are three along the wall which turns round to the North and encloses the temple of Apollo. Besides the tower of ingress we know of only one which existed in the fifteenth century, on the spot where to-day the Abbatial rooms stand, which were inhabited by Pietro de Tartaris, and from which he addressed his letters.[1] All the others were destroyed to make way, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, for the present Abbey walls, which are sloping, with battlements and a cornice below, like those made by Sangallo in his military operations, thus skilfully uniting architectural grace with the utilities of war.

This was the Roman *Arx*, confined to the highest crest of the mountain; but, in the pre-historic times of Rome, it had a larger enclosure of cyclopic walls, like those of Ferentinum, Alatri, Amelia, Arpinum, and Antina. Of these there are yet some remains, composed of large calcareous stones in the form of polygons, and standing on the flat part of the mountain looking westward. These are only the remains of the high walls, which supplied stones to the constructors of the Roman *Arx*, and afterwards to the successive builders of the modern Abbey of Cassino. There remains, however, one wall, more than 8 metres high and 4·40 thick. This ancient Acropolis was completed by two walls intersected with towers; one, which ran down the mountain on the Southern, the other on the Northern side, and both embraced the city below. They were like the two sides of an isosceles triangle, which had its top at the Acropolis and its base at the city. The remains are yet to be seen of these two gigantic screens, descending to the valley, so that, by measuring the distance between their

[1] "Datum in nostro monasterio Casinensi, in Camera Turris nostræ residentiæ." Regestum I. Petri de Tartaris, p. clii. 74. Regarding the part taken by this Abbot in the election of Urban VI. in 1378, the volumes *De Schismate* of the Vatican Archives may be consulted, and especially volumes 17, 23, 26, dell' Arm., liv. See also Gayet, *Schisme d'Occident.* Florence, Loescher, 1889.

extreme ends, an idea may be formed of the extent of the ancient city of Cassino before the Roman epoch. The entrance tower of this Pelasgic Acropolis arose on the level part of the mountain, near the little Church of St Agatha, at a distance of fifty metres from the Roman one. Mabillon, at the close of the seventeenth century, found only its gate existing. We have not seen it, because it was afterwards ruthlessly destroyed.[1]

Having passed the portal of the tower, which was afterwards inhabited by St Benedict, one ascended to that part of the mountain, in which, I know not whether by nature or by art, the decline ceased and a sort of habitation was formed,—that into which, to-day, the three great courts of the Abbey open out. Precisely on the area of the court, to the right, arose the temple dedicated to Apollo, of which more by and by ; and, perhaps, on the opposite side, that sacred to Jupiter. Up to this time, no writer on Cassinese history has ever mentioned the worship of this divinity, because St Gregory does not speak of it. But Mark, a disciple of St Benedict, clearly mentions twice in his poem, that the people, blinded by error, came to this place to offer bloody sacrifices to Jupiter, and to fulfil their vows to him.[2] Clear testimony is given to this fact by a stone, discovered in 1880, which bears upon it the dedication of his temple, in the following words :—

M . OC(t) AVIVS . M . F . CALVINVS
LA(t)ERINVS Q . F . Q.
AEDE(m . i)OVIS . A . SOLO . ET . PORTICVM
CVM . (aedi)FICIIS . EX . C . C . P . P. FACIEND.
(cu)RAVER(unt).

In that space, occupied, to-day, by the great stone stairs

[1] Lib. ii. cap. liii. : ". . . usque ad portam veterem aliquanto extra monasterii ambitum procedentes, obviam cum devotione maxima exierunt."

[2] "Templa ruinosis hic olim struxerat aris,
Queis dabat obscæno sacra cruenta Jovi.
. . . . . .
Ad quem cæcatis errantes mentibus ibant
Improba mortifero reddere vota Jovi."

leading from the courts to the Cassinese Basilica, and by the peristyle with its porticoes, which stands before it, was the *Lucus*, or sacred grove, which stretched from west to east right up to the extreme crest of the mountain, where the altar of the god was. On the left side of this, towards the north, stood the *Fanum*, of which the whole basement yet remains, and supports the sacristy of the Basilica. Not many years ago, this basement, which had been entirely forgotten, when its ground plot was lifted up, was found to be Roman, and to correspond with that of which Vitruvius tells us, as belonging to that kind of edifice; and as the *Fanum* always had, in the middle of it, a fountain or cistern for lustrations, so one exists in this place, with its orifice of Parian marble, deeply worn by those who came there to use the water. The illustrious Fiorelli found it similar to many others discovered at Pompeii.

11. St Benedict, having arrived on Monte Cassino, the place destined by God for his seat, knew that it was time to put his hand to the great work of his Apostolate. Of the grain of mustard seed, that Gospel symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven, which Christ's disciples had sown for five centuries through the universe, and which had grown up into a tree, one shoot was already mature, namely, that of the Kingdom of God in the civil community of men. St Benedict knew this. That three years' penance in the cave, that habitual virtue of dwelling with himself under the eye of God, that practical training in legislation amongst the monks of Subiaco, was a preparation for his Apostolic ministry. Endowed by God with the spirit of prophecy, he knew, beforehand, the whole history of it; and, at the same time, all its consolations and sorrows in the long course of ages. An Apostle, but yet always human, he wished to rest somewhat, and by prayer and fasting to take in the spirit of God. Therefore, before approaching the Roman *Arx*, he shut himself up in the cyclopean tower above-mentioned, and, apart from all human society, he remained there for forty days, in imitation of his Divine Master. The Cassinese, who had followed him,

were dismayed at this holy withdrawal; his absence from their sight and presence, made them feel like desolate orphans, so that they laid pious siege to the holy man, and besought him to show himself. So the poet Mark tells us.[1] These lamentations clearly show that, before the Saint's preaching and many conversions among the Cassinese are mentioned, when he was only just arrived in their country, this people was already accustomed to love and venerate him as one sent by God.

In this holy love towards St Benedict, the Cassinese neophytes imitated, without knowing it, that which the elders of the Church of Ephesus manifested towards St Paul, who was about to leave them for ever. After St Paul had preached to them a farewell sermon, which forms the most beautiful page of the Acts of the Apostles, and after a common prayer, there was bitter weeping among all, and throwing themselves on Paul's neck, they covered him with kisses, being full of anguish because he had told them they would see his face no more.[2] That which happened at Ephesus, happened also on Monte Cassino, the filial love of the neophytes towards the Evangelical workers being the fruit of Faith in their Divine mission.

The author of the "Life of St Placid" mentions also the Saint's retirement for forty days,[3] and Paul the Deacon[4] says distinctly that the forty days were those of Lent; and further, Mark affirms that the Saint went into seclusion in order to await the beautiful festival of the "sacred night,"—

1 "Hic quoque te clausum populi, te teste, requirunt,
Expectas noctis, cum pia festa sacræ.
Qui velut orbati raucis tibi flere querelis
Instant, convictu quod caruere tuo."

2 And there was much weeping among them all; and falling on the neck of Paul, they kissed him, being grieved most of all for the word which he had said, that they should see his face no more. And they brought him on his way to the ship.—Act. Apost., ch. xx. 37.

3 "Cumque ad Casinum Castrum Benedictus Pater pervenisset, per quadraginta dies Omnipotentem orans permansit."—Acta SS. O. S. B., tom. i. p. 47.

4 ". . . quadragesimæ tempore inclusus et remotus a mundi strepitu mansit."—Hist. Longobard.

that is, the Pasch.[1] I mention this because it throws much light on the time of St Benedict's arrival at Monte Cassino. Baronius and Mabillon, following the testimony of the author of the "Life of St Placid," are agreed in assigning the year of St Benedict's departure from Subiaco as 529, in the reign of Justinian, not Justin, as the interpolator of that Life has it. In that year the Pasch was celebrated on the 8th day of April; therefore on the 27th day of February, the first day of Lent, St Benedict arrived at Monte Cassino. And if in January he started from Subiaco, taking away the few days necessary for the journey from thence to Cassino, it is clear that he had forty days in the latter place, for the conversion of the inhabitants to the true Faith. Hence, on the 8th day of April, he came forth from the Pelasgic tower, which was not far from the Temple of Apollo, and not from the Roman one which was near it.

12. The sun, which thirty-two years before could not find its way into the cave of the penitent Benedict amid the mountains of Subiaco, in April of the year 529, on his first looking out from the Apennine heights, cast his light upon the crest of Monte Cassino, and clothed with purple the Pelasgic tower inhabited by the Apostle St Benedict. From this tower Benedict came forth singing the *Alleluia* of the Resurrection of Christ, and of those souls whom by his word he had roused from their sleep of death, and who were now near him, as companions in triumph. They had to sing *Alleluia* with him and his monks and the pious crowds who rejoiced to see him again; and the *Alleluia* was repeated by the echo of the valleys. All moved on towards the neighbouring Roman *Arx*. The little monastic colony from Subiaco went first, raising on high the Processional Cross; the Saint followed with his faithful Cassinese, lifting up, in chorus, the Paschal hymn, and beseeching God kindly to bend down His eyes of mercy on that citadel and purify it from the superstition of idols. Thus also, seventy years afterwards, did the sons of Benedict approach the land of England, to convert it to the

[1] "Expectas noctis, cum pia festa sacræ."

Faith of Christ, and to civilise it; the same Cross was borne before, as a standard of triumph, according to the Church's custom, and there were the same invocations in imitation of their Master.[1]

Thus the Saint entered the gate of the first tower, which he afterwards chose for his abode; and, having ascended the rocky declivity, he came to the level space, where, on this side and that, the temples of Apollo and of Jove, adorned with porticoes, were displayed before the eye. He then entered into the *Lucus*, or sacred grove, and set about the destruction of whatever fostered the worship of the false gods. He did not rush at this work with the impetuosity of blind zeal, but he acted with that discretion and purpose, which are always prescribed by the Church in the destruction of Paganism. He did not set fire to the trees, as some manuscripts imply by the word *succendit*, but he cut them down, according to Monte Cassino manuscripts, which have the word *succidit*.[2] To have given them to the flames, would have been the work of a Saracen, not of an Apostle; and to have had recourse to burning would have been opposed to his design of building a church and monastery. The cutting down of a wood is not done in a day; therefore it was accomplished by degrees, and regulated in such a way that, when the grove disappeared, the trees might come in useful to the Christians.

[1] "Itaque appropinquans possidendæ civitati pacifer Augustinus cum beato Sanctorum Choro, elato, ex more, Crucis Domini argenteæ triumphali vexillo, cum imagine vivifica ipsius sempiterni Regis Jesu Christi invocat suppliciter super eam Salvatoris salvatricem clementiam. Tunc hanc letanialem Antiphonam dulcimode intonat, et cum excipiente primitiva Anglorum nutrice Ecclesia, consona modulatione ac devotione decantat: Deprecamur te Domine, in omni misericordia tua ut auferatur furor tuus, et ira tua a civitate ista et a domo sancta tua, quoniam peccavimus."—Vita S. Augustin. Cant., Acta SS. O. S. B., tom. i. p. 498, 19.

[2] The readings of the Cassinese codices agree with that of the eighth century in uncial writing, at one time kept at Bobbio, now among the Ambrosian collection. It has been learnedly edited by the famous P. Abate Cozza Luzi, a Basilian, and at present the worthy Vice-Librarian of the Sac. Cong. of Rites. They also agree with a codex of the tenth century, in possession of the Canons of the Metropolitan Church of Chieti.

13. The Saint, after having entered the *Fanum*, which was to the north, ascended the highest crest of the mountain, where he found the idol of Apollo, placed on the top of a column of Parian marble. The height of the latter was 2·13 metres and its circumference 1 metre; and it was laced with a spiral line without any other decoration. The pagans were accustomed to place on columns not only the statues of celebrated men, but also representations of their gods, for which the Christians substituted the Cross or some other sacred image.[1] St Benedict broke the idol, and preserved the column and the pedestal which supported the image, on which he planted his Processional Cross in token of triumph. The column, with the foot of the idol and the Cross, is yet seen standing, to the right, in the portico of the Cassinese Basilica. There is no reason to doubt the truth regarding this monument,[2] handed down to us, as it is, by an ancient, uninterrupted tradition, confirmed also by the column itself, which is Roman, by the pedestal of the idol of serpentine, not modern, marble, beautifully fluted, and by the form of the Cross used in the sixth century. Arnoldo Wion, in his *Martirologio Benedettino*, Simone Millezio, Mabillon, and Marangoni,[3] who saw this column, did not doubt its history; indeed, the last-named writer adduces it as an example of other Pagan monuments turned to purposes of Christian worship.

Before the column, surmounted by the idol, St Benedict found the altar, which, perhaps, yet smoked with the sacrifices offered by the infidels. He did not break it, but only threw down the tablet upon the ground. The reader may find, in Rich's work, an example of an altar placed at the foot of an idol.[4] There is yet preserved, in the Abbey, a pedestal of

[1] Marangoni, "Delle cose gentilesche e profane ad uso e adornamento delle chiese."—Roma, 1744, p. 352.

[2] Haeften, "Disquis. Monast.," tom. i. p. 105.

[3] "Iter Ital.," p. 120. "Ad portam Ecclesiæ uterque Parens S. Benedicti, cum columna Marmorea, cui impositum erat olim Apollinis idolum, quod S. Pater comminuit."

[4] *Dizionario delle antichità Greche e Romane*, a translation from English by Ruggero Bonghi and Guiseppe del Re, tom. i. p. 47.

most rare porphyry, 0·55 of a metre in height, fluted, and like that on which the idol of Apollo rested, but of more perfect workmanship. It points to the Augustan age, and might be thought to belong to the above-mentioned altar.

14. St Benedict, faithful to the traditions of the Roman Church,[1] built an Oratory to St John Baptist on the spot where the altar of Apollo was, and where for fourteen centuries the Cassinese Basilica has stood. It must be mentioned that under the Pagan altar there was a crypt, whence the priests of the god gave their answers. When that altar was replaced by a Christian one, it was the spot chosen by St Benedict for his own and his sister Scholastica's body to repose after death. In like manner, he did not destroy the temple of Apollo, because it was Pagan, but made an Oratory or church of it, and dedicated it to St Martin of Tours.

The Abbot Desiderius, so famous for the restoration of the Arts in Italy, was not always careful in the preservation of the ancient monuments of the Abbey. Influenced by the desire to give his name to more magnificent works, such as the famous Cassinese Basilica, which he built in the eleventh century, he had the church of St Martin pulled down,—that church built by St Benedict, and almost the only one of the ancient monuments left standing at that time,[2]—and reconstructed it from the foundations. Desiderius made a

[1] St Augustine, Epist. 47, *ad Publicolam:* "Cum templa, idola, luci . . . in honorem veri Dei convertuntur, hoc de illis fit quod de hominibus, cum ex sacrilegis et impiis in veram religionem mutantur." It is beautiful to see how, and why, the Pagan edifices were to be converted to Christian worship, in St Gregory's 7th Epistle to the Abbot Mellitus, not long after the time of St Benedict, in which we read: ". . . fana idolorum destrui in eadem gente minime debeant, sed ipsa quæ in eis sunt idola destruantur. Aqua benedicta fiat, in eisdem fanis aspergatur, altaria construantur, reliquiæ ponantur, quia si fana eadem bene constructa sunt, necesse est ut a cultu dæmonum in obsequium veri Dei debeant commutari ut dum gens ipsa eadem fana non videt destrui, de corde errorem deponat et Deum verum cognoscens ac adorans, ad loca quæ consuevit familiarius concurrat."

[2] Chronicon Cassin., Lib. iii. cap. xxxiv.: ". . . quæ sola fere jam intra monasterii ambitum de veteribus ædificiis remanserat."

mistake; but how many others do the like, through false archæological reasons! In the description which the chronicler gives of it, he says that it was supported by eighteen columns, nine on each side, and that the apse was covered with rich mosaics, on which were engraved in golden letters some verses, which I render into plain language—"This place was once dedicated to the worship of demons, and Apollo was venerated in this temple, which our Father Benedict, when he came here, converted to the honour of the Omnipotent God, under the name of St Martin. This, after a hundred lustres, being old and small, Desiderius dismantled, rebuilt, and enlarged."[1] From these words it is clear, that St Benedict did not destroy the temple of Apollo, as Desiderius did the Saint's Oratory, but he converted it to the honour of God, *vertit in honorem Dei;* that is, he used the temple for the worship of the True God. And I think that Desiderius's eighteen pillars supported the temple which St Benedict found there. Afterwards Desiderius's church, dedicated to St Martin, met the same fate as the Saint's Oratory, when, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, in the operations carried out by Bramante and Sangallo, the Abbey came to be enlarged and decorated with Medicean magnificence. At the same time St Martin, dislodged by the encroachments of the new buildings, was relegated to the north side of the Basilica of St John Baptist, and there a small church was raised for him on the foundations of the ancient Fanum, as we see it at this day.

St Gregory makes no mention of the temple of Jove, and of what St Benedict did with it. It is certain, arguing from the size of the dedication-stone lately discovered, that it was not of small architectural dimensions.

In the seventeenth century, whilst the foundations of the northern part of the new edifice, intended for a hospice for pilgrims, were being dug, some ancient marbles and other antiquities were discovered, and, as Gattola remarks in his written journal, No. 53, perhaps they belonged to the temple

[1] Chronicon Cassin, Lib. iii. cap. xxxiv.

of Jove, which stood on the north side, in the same area as the temple of Apollo. It is certain that the column of Oriental granite, not all entire, which Fanzaga used in the seventeenth century to support the arches of the naves of the modern Cassinese Basilica, and also the numerous fragments of the same marble, which are yet seen in various parts of the Abbey, are only remains of the same Pagan buildings.

15. The mountain being purified from every Pagan memorial, St Benedict set to work, with that power received immediately from God, to convert the inhabitants of the surrounding country to the Faith of Christ, and with such zeal, that his preaching, as St Gregory states, was incessant.[1] Those converted to the Gospel he watched over, and they were strengthened in the faith through the labours of his monks, who were appointed by him to the care of souls. This is clearly shown by his biographer, who tells us[2] that St Benedict was often accustomed to send some of his disciples into parts of the country not far distant from the monastery, where there were large numbers of people whom he had converted by his preaching from the worship of idols, in order that they might instruct them, that is, strengthen them in the Faith. This Apostolate and care of souls, exercised by St Benedict, was the origin of the quasi-episcopal jurisdiction which the Abbots of Monte Cassino, his successors, afterwards possessed over the ancient diocese of Cassino. This diocese had lost its Bishops, but not its autonomy. Therefore St Benedict, who, by a Divine mission, had converted its inhabitants to the Faith, became their spiritual Pastor. This administration, coming afterwards into the hands of his successors, was confirmed by the Popes, who, by their supreme jurisdiction, closed the succession of the Cassinese Bishops, and subjected the diocese immediately to themselves. Thus the Abbots of Monte Cassino, without the episcopal character, have administered it even to our own times, being

[1] "Et commorantem circumquaque multitudinem prædicatione continua, ad fidem vocabat."—Cap. viii.

[2] Dialog., cap. xix.

Bishops, as it were, by papal delegation, and exempt from the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan; and the Abbey became a kind of Apostolic Vicariate. These Abbies, called *Nullius*, are most clear historical testimonies of the right of the Roman Pontificate in the marking out of dioceses, and of the right to reserve and annex territories to the Bishopric of Rome.

CHAPTER V.

1. The hermit Martin—2. St Benedict builds the monastery of Monte Cassino—3. How the devil makes war against him—4. He raises to life the little labouring monk—5. Description of the monastery—6. What kind of, and how many monks lived in it, and their life—7. The Rule of St Benedict—8. The Prologue and scope of it—9. Various kinds of monks: the Cenobites—10. The Abbot and his duties—11. The Præpositus and the Seniors—12. The way of spiritual progress—13. Psalmody and Prayer—14. The dogmatic parts of the Rule—15. Labour and literary studies—16. Food and weight of bread—17. Clothes and bed—18. The Cellarer—19. The intercourse of the monks—20. Guests—21. Election of the Abbot—22. The autograph of the Rule.

1. THE reader will, perhaps, wish to learn from me, how it was that, during all that work of the destruction of Paganism on Monte Cassino, the Saint did not meet with obstacles and persecutions from the priests and worshippers of Apollo, for such a work, at other times, would have won the crown of martyrdom. But, for two reasons, all went peacefully; firstly, through the Saint's preaching in the Cassinese territory, which brought the people to the Faith of Christ; and secondly, through the donation which the Patrician Tertullus made to him, at Subiaco, of the land which he possessed there. To this it was added, that through the edicts of Constantine and Theodosius in favour of Christianity, which had become the religion of the State, the Pagan worship was declared unlawful, and was no longer under the protection of the civil law. Wherever, therefore, the Christian worship was practised, Paganism no longer showed itself intolerant. Indeed, whilst on the top of the mountain sacrifices were offered to Apollo, there was, in a cave of the same mountain, a holy hermit, named Martin, who lived as an anchoret. Everybody knew him, for the cave was not far from the Acropolis, in an easterly direction, there being no other cave like this on

the mountain side, formed, as it was, by nature and not by art; and none of the Pagans dared disturb the holy man's peace.

Apollo was adored at the same time that the holy hermit was venerated. These remains of superstition, by the side of Christian Faith, St Leo, the Pope, had lamented over, when he was unable to wean some newly-baptised Romans from making superstitious salutations to the rising sun, whilst they were piously going up to the Basilica of St Peter to venerate the Holy Sepulchre.[1] Peter, the Deacon, of Monte Cassino,[2] has written the Life of this St Martin; and Mark, the poet, and the author of the "Life of St Placid," says that this hermit, as soon as St Benedict arrived on the mountain, by a Divine revelation, quitted that cave, and went and buried himself in another, on Mount Marsico, in the country of Carinola, which is in sight of Monte Cassino.[3]

Without wishing to disbelieve in the revelation, I think that St Benedict also advised the holy hermit to go elsewhere. The eremitical or anchoret's life, as St Benedict himself says in his Rule, is the most perfect, on account of the severity of its penitential character; but it was not this to which St Benedict wished to educate his monks, for it did not suit the scope of the Order which he was to found. He wished his disciples to be holy; but, to the perfection of the individual, he desired to unite the social perfection of the cenobitical family, in order that, through it, the Christian civil family might be evangelised. The sight of the penitent hermit might have dissolved that first group of disciples, through a love of higher perfection. Therefore, St Benedict induced him to seek another cave, but with such kindness, that the hermit venerated him from a distance, and put himself under his guidance.

St Gregory, who gives us an account of some of this holy hermit's miracles, narrates the following:—"When he came

[1] *Sermo de Nativitate*, cap. iv. [2] *De ortu et obitu Justorum Casin.*

[3] "Hic quoque viventi Justo prædixerat uni;
His tu parce locis, alter amicus adest."

to the mountain Marsico, and had taken up his abode in a cave which had no outlet, he fastened an iron chain round his foot and fixed the end of it in the opposite rock, in order that he might not go beyond the length of the chain. The holy man Benedict, of whom we have already made mention, having heard of this, sent to him, by one of his disciples, this message:—'If thou art a servant of God, let not a chain of iron, but the chain of the love of Christ, hold thee.' Upon this advice Martin at once unloosed the chain, but never afterwards put his foot outside the cave, to which he had been used to be bound." In this fact is beautifully brought out the spirit of St Benedict, which shunned material means for keeping the soul in union with God. This coercion of the iron chain, in order to bind the hermit's will to the cloister of his cave, was an insult to that dominion of the human reason over the body, by which it does not let itself be subjugated to the latter, in the exercise of spiritual things. To the stiff-necked Hebrew the knife of circumcision was, at one time, necessary, to make him bend to the yoke of the law; but now it is not by a chain nor the knife, but by reason and Faith, that we are all one with Christ. This principle was, then, the foundation of the Saint's Rule; it was the channel of that life-stream, which flowed through the members of his Order.

Martin had, at that time, disciples, who lived in a monastery at some distance from his cave, at the foot of the Marsico, and perhaps they embraced the Rule of St Benedict, as Peter the Deacon has written their lives among those of the Cassinese Saints. Martin was buried in the church of Carinola, and his remains were afterwards translated to Monte Cassino, in the year 1094. His name is found in the Roman Martyrology, on the 24th of October.[1]

2. Whilst St Benedict was labouring for the conversion of the idolaters, he laid the foundation of that monastery, whose history formed so large a part of that of the Middle Age,

[1] Petrus Diac, *De obitu et ortu Just. Casin.*; Ferrarius, *Catalog. SS., Ital. ad diem 24 Oct.* Hæftenus, Disq. Monast., Vol. I.

and which was the first seat of the great Order which he established. As, when the Saint first arrived with his disciples on the top of Monte Cassino, he took up his abode in the large tower of the Acropolis, so they, at the beginning, had to take refuge where the priests of Apollo had dwelt. Without delay, the Saint set to work at the building of his monastery, he himself being the architect, for he alone knew what was necessary for his monks, according to the prescriptions of his Holy Rule.

He did not call workmen and labourers from outside, but his own disciples fetched the stones, the lime, and other things necessary for building. He had as many labourers as he needed, for other monks came from Subiaco to help in that work which was destined to contribute so much to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

3. The evil spirit, much enraged at the work that was being done, gave all his energy to opposing it in terrible ways, as St Gregory describes to us. "But," he says, "the ancient enemy, unable to bear these things in silence, not in a hidden way, nor in a dream, but in a visible form, showed himself to the holy Father, and complained, in a loud voice, that he was being badly treated, so that the Brothers, though they did not see, yet heard him. And, as the venerable Father told his disciples, the old enemy appeared to him in a horrible and fiery form, and, with flaming mouth and eyes, seemed enraged against him. All heard what he said: at first he called the Saint by name, but when Benedict paid no attention to him, he broke out into revilings. He first called out 'Benedict, Benedict' (*i.e.* Blessed), but getting no notice, he forthwith shouted, 'Cursed, not Blessed, what hast thou to do with me? Why dost thou persecute me?'"[1]

[1] "Sed hæc antiquus hostis tacito non ferens, non occulte, vel per somnium, sed aperta visione ejusdem Patris se oculis ingerebat, et magnis clamoribus vim se perpeti conquerebatur, ita ut vocem illius etiam Fratres audirent, quamvis imaginem minime cernerent. Ut enim discipulis suis venerabilis Pater dicebat, corporalibus oculis ejus idem antiquus hostis teterrimus, et succensus apparebat, qui in eum ore oculisque flammantibus sævire vibebatur. Jam vero quæ diceret audiebant omnes: prius enim hunc vocabat ex nomine; cui cum vir Dei minime

St Gregory also relates, that when the monks wanted to lift a large stone for the building, the devil made it immovable, just as if it had taken deep root in the earth ; but, the Saint having made the sign of the cross over it, the devil was put to flight, and the monks were able to lift it without any trouble. There is yet standing, in the court nearest to the tower, a sepulchral column, with an amphora and patera sculptured on its sides, but without any inscription, for this has been erased, and in its place a Cross cut in relief. The most ancient tradition tells us, that this is the stone of the miracle we have mentioned. The French monk, Simon Millet, who visited the Abbey in the sixteenth century, speaks of it in his Commentaries on St Gregory's Dialogues.[1] From words the evil spirit passed to deeds, which were at first harmless, but afterwards fearfully mischievous. The monks, in digging the foundations of a wall, had gone deep into the ground. They found an idol of bronze, which, being Pagan and unholy, they cast into the kitchen. Soon the place was all filled with flames, and threatened with destruction. The tumult of those rushing for water, to extinguish the fire, and of others crying out for help, brought the man of God to the spot. But he, not seeing the fire which appeared to the eyes of the monks, knew that it was a wicked illusion of the enemy, and, having bowed down his head in prayer for some time, he told the affrighted labourers that they must sign their eyes with the Cross, and they would no longer see these fantastic flames.

4. On another day, when the monks were busy building a wall, suddenly they saw it fall and bury under its ruins one of the young monks, an *alumnus* of St Benedict, and the son of a courtier. The sorrowing Brothers extricated his body, but found it lifeless and a shapeless mass, so broken and crushed were the bones. They put the poor youth's bruised

responderet, ad ejus mox contumelias erumpebat. Nam cum clamaret dicens :—' Benedicte, Benedicte,' et cum sibi nullo modo respondere conspiceret, protinus adjungebat : ' Maledicte, et non Benedicte, quid mecum habes ? Quid me persequeris ?' "

[1] Hæftenus Disquis. Monast., tom. i. p. 107.

form into a sack, and brought it to the man of God, who was kneeling in prayer on an osier mat, which St Gregory calls *Psiattio.* They laid it on the ground before him, without speaking a word, for the pitiable sight and their tears said enough. They all went out of the cell. The Saint, shutting the door, entered into his usual communion with God. He prayed with greater vehemence than ever that God would restore to him, alive, the little workman, who had died in the exercise of monastic obedience, and he was immediately heard. The Lord, who had formed the first man from the slime of the earth, drew forth, from those lacerated members, the young man, restored to life and health. The Man of God sent him, at once, back to his work, as if no misfortune had befallen him, and he had done nothing to restore him to life.

5. The reader will now, perhaps, wish to have a description of that first Monastery of the Benedictine Order, the work of the holy Founder himself. Perhaps one of the Saint's disciples wrote regarding this foundation, according to the custom of the monks, in order to hand down the memory of it to posterity; but, in the Lombard devastation, which occurred not long after the death of St Benedict, such history has been lost, and either St Gregory had not seen or heard of it, or he chose, after the example of others, to say nothing of it. Nevertheless, following the book of the Holy Rule, and the brief Notes of places where, in the eighth century, some miracles of the Saint took place, I will say something of it.

These Notes are found in the Codex, formerly marked 353, now 175, written at the foot of the page, in an exposition of St Benedict's Rule, attributed to Paul the Deacon, and not easy to read. Mabillon, Della Noce, and Gattola, have published them, but not quite correctly. I cite them here in a note, reduced to a better reading.[1]

[1] "In turre justas. Martinum in fenestra alta que est contra capuam vidit sanctus anima germani capuani episcopi, et ibi in fenestra que est contra plumba[riolam] vidit anima sanctæ scol[asticæ]. ibi resanavit severum contritum et leprosum, et ibi cunctas virtutes fecit, in fundo turris fecit miraculum de labello dei, et ibi supra arca tridecim solidi de auro ceciderunt, per fenestra vidit anima sanctæ scol[astice]

St Benedict always remained in the tower of the Acropolis: this was his abode. It was divided, as to-day, into two storeys, though they were not then separated by the flooring which now is seen, but by one of wood. In the lower room, which is 8 metres in length and 3·80 in breadth, with a window looking to the west, the Saint lived, read, wrote, and received visitors. In this he wrote the copy of his Rule, and wrought various miracles. The higher room, which had two windows, one to the south and the other to the west, was his Oratory, and in this he had wonderful visions. St Gregory says that a flight of stairs, perhaps of wood, and of continuous ascent (*continuus ascensus*) united the two storeys; by this the Abbot Servandus, the Deacon, ascended, when he was called by the Saint to be witness of the vision he had of the soul of Germanus. On the eastern side of the tower ran the dormitory of the monks, who did not pass the night in separate cells, but in a common room, in decuries, each decury watched over by a senior or dean, and separated from each other by a curtain or matting, as a safeguard of modesty, according to Mabillon's opinion.[1] Other dormitories were destined for the boys, the young men, and the novices; there were cells for guests, pilgrims, and the poor; the refectory, kitchen, cellar, kitchen-garden, mill, vestiarium, or place where the clothes and other things intended for the use of the monks were preserved; the offices of those who exercised arts and trades, and the library whence the monks took manuscripts for reading and study. The church of the monastery was the Oratory of St Martin, and not that of St John Baptist, which was on the top of the mountain, and

jactata est ampulla de vitro, ibi sanctus Maurus claudum estendit, in podio qui est in dormitorio ante porta de turre solsit rusticu, et ibi carrivit ad totila in refectorio qui est justa ipsum dormitorium profetavit de roma et de pani, in turre ipsa scripsit regula, in pede de rabe que vadit a sanctum Johanne fugabi demone, in fronte de ipsu dormitorio et de sanctu mart[ino] feci cerbenera da foris porta a pede de turre imbenit moia de forina, altare de sanctu mart[ino] fuit sub corona de rame, in ipsa turre omni anno in sancti benedicti altare biariczo faciebant officium greci et latini sicut precepit petronax abbas."

[1] "Solis tabulis aut velis ad invicem, ut par est, ob honestatem discretos." —Annal., lib. iii. p. 56.

separated from it by rocks and the ancient wood. A door on the eastern side of the tower led into the dormitory, through what is called, in the eighth century description, a *poio*, or *podia*, a little portico, in which the Saint used to stand, except at the time of manual labour and common prayer, to watch both the monks who were in the dormitory, and those who entered by the northern door of the tower. During this act of surveillance he never ceased from reading. Thus engaged was he found, as we shall by and by relate, by the countryman tormented by the Goth Zalla, that is to say, alone, seated at the entrance of his cell, where the podio was, and reading.[1]

In the centennial year of St Benedict's birth, 1880, on first entering through the door of the tower, there was seen, to the right, a marble shrine, of the fifteenth century, which contained a St Benedict sitting in the attitude of blessing, with his right hand, and with his left pointing out, in the open book of his Rule, those first words: *Ausculta, O fili, præcepta magistri.* This monument records some miracles, wrought by the Saint in this place, and expressed in these verses engraved there:—

> "Mortuus hic puer est. Benedicti voce revixit.
> Tacta silex cubiti subsedit pondere sacri.
> Plena oleo phiala signantur saxa cadenti.
> Bis centum modii farinæ mane videntur."

These words signify that there, at the voice of St Benedict, a dead boy was restored to life; that the stone yielded to the pressure of his arms; that the rock retained the impression of the falling phial of oil; that one morning two hundred bushels of flour were found. With the desire of bringing to light every remnant of St Benedict's first monastery, this little chapel was excavated, and the door

[1] Dialog., lib. ii. cap. xxxi.: "eumque *ante ingressum* cellæ *solum sedentem reperit et legentem.*" The reader must notice that, in this passage, the word *cella* properly means monk's cell or room, not *monastery*, as the writers of debased Latinity often make it mean. Hence St Benedict was in the *podio* before his cell.

found, which led to the monastery. This discovery threw much light on the first topography of the monastic buildings.

6. What has been said will suffice, for the present, to let the reader see what was their first form; but who, and how many, were the monks that first inhabited the monastery, I am not able to say, as the ancient manuscripts do not furnish the statistics. Nevertheless, by recalling them to mind, I can gather some particulars. There is no doubt that, as we learn from St Gregory, many holy monks lived under the guidance of St Benedict on Monte Cassino. The fame of what he had done, of his virtues, of his miracles at Subiaco, had the effect of drawing to his newly-founded monastery a great number of monks, all of whom, when he saw they were led by the Spirit of God, the holy legislator received with the utmost charity, without distinction of age, birth, riches, or learning. First among these shone forth, in sanctity, Maurus, the son of Equitius, who held the office of Præpositus of the monastery, and supported his master in the government of the Congregation; and Placid, the son of Tertullus. These two were, above others, dear to his heart and were chosen out of all the rest as the first propagators of his Rule in France and Sicily.

St Constantine, one of the four disciples of St Benedict from whom Gregory learned particulars of the Saint's life, was called, by the holy Pope, a most reverend man (*viro valde reverendissimo*). His perfection of life was so great that, after St Benedict's death, he was considered worthy to succeed him in the government of the Abbey. He was placed, after his death, at the feet of the Saint, in the same sepulchre, where he was found by Abbot Desiderius in the eleventh century, by the Cardinal of Aragon at the latter end of the fifteenth, by the Abbot Simplicius Cafarelli, who translated him into the chapel of the martyr Abbot St Bertarius, and, finally, a century later, he was placed in the chapel, which the Cassinese dedicated to him and to his successor Abbot Simplicius. His name is mentioned as that of a Saint, by Peter the Deacon, Arnold Wion, and Ugo

Menardo,[1] in their martyrologies, on March 29th, and by Mabillon.[2]

St Simplicius, the second successor of St Benedict, had the same fame for sanctity, the same honours after death, and was commemorated by the same writers. Odo, Abbot of Glanfeuil, in the epistle which he prefixed to the Life of St Maurus, written by Faustus, affirms that he had had, in his hand, a Life of Simplicius, which has not come down to us. This monk was a zealous propagator of the Rule of the Saint, and also wrote verses in praise of it and of its diffusion, which are given by Menardo, Holstenius, and others.[3]

The other two successors of St Benedict, Vitalis and Banitus, under the latter of whom the destruction of the monastery by the Lombard Zoto took place, who lived with him, are not mentioned with the title of Saints. Valentinian and Gregory, the two first Abbots of the Lateran monastery, in which the Cassinese took refuge when dispersed by the Lombards, were also under his direction. If the Life of the first-mentioned, seen by Odo of Glanfeuil, had come down to us, we should have learnt many other things about St Benedict, as this monk was one of the four from whom St Gregory derived his materials.[4] Those two disciples of St Benedict, Paulinus and Augustine, were honoured as saints, of whom Peter the Deacon[5] narrates, that their bodies, having been buried on the spot where afterwards arose the church of St Peter, were taken out of the tomb by order of Abbot Oderisius, and reverently placed in the wall of the church of St Andrew. Together with these are mentioned Saints Constantinianus and Antony, who accompanied St Maurus in his journey into France, and whose names are commemorated on the 3rd of September in the martyrologies of Wion and Menardo.

Pope Celestine II, when afterwards dedicating the church

[1] De ortu et obitu Just. Casin., cap. x.
[2] Annal., tom. i. p. 143.
[3] Petrus Diac. *De viris ill. Casin.*, cap. v.
[4] Petrus Diac. *De ortu et obitu Just. Cas.*, cap. xiv.
[5] *Chronic. Casin.*, lib. iv. cap. xxiii.

of St Maurus at Glanfeuil, through reverence took their bodies out of the grave. Two other disciples of St Benedict were Simplicius and Faustus, companions of St Maurus, and who lived with him for forty years in France.[1] Faustus wrote St Maurus's Life. I shall speak of this later on, but I cannot help, at present, referring to a passage of his epistle, prefixed to this Life, because it so delightfully makes us feel the spiritual sweetness which St Benedict infused into the souls of his disciples, and which kept them so closely united to him. After having said that Maurus came to the Divine service, offered by his parents at the age of seven, in the monastery of Monte Cassino, and that when the years of childhood were passed he freely, with all his heart, bound himself to the monastic life, he states that he never, for an instant, wished to withdraw himself from the presence of his Master Benedict, but that he wished to remain ever subject to that holy teaching, so much approved by God, and followed by men; and with most ardent affection did he desire to have the constant edification of such a glorious example.[2]

We must not omit to mention the young boy Severus, who was raised to life by the Saint, and who, being loved by his master with especial tenderness, as a child of miracle, followed with greater fervour in that master's footsteps. But of this spiritual Cassinese company he that has become dearest to our memory is Mark, called the Poet, because, after he had made his monastic profession at Monte Cassino, he wrote verses in praise of St Benedict. They are only in all thirty-two distichs; few in number, but written with such intensity of affection, that every syllable casts a ray of light on the deeds of his master. Paul the Deacon tells us that he drew, from Mark's verses, the facts, in his Life of St Benedict, which refer to the destruction of the idols on Monte Cassino.[3]

[1] Petrus Diac. *De ortu et obitu Just. Cas.*, cap. xiv.

[2] Acta SS. O. S. B., tom. i. p. 276.

[3] "Hæc omnia ex Marci Poetæ carmine sumpsi, qui eumdem Patrem, huc veniens, aliquot versus in ejusdem laude composuit."—De Gestis Longobard, lib. i. cap. xxvi.

"St Benedict," he says, "purified the place: having broken to pieces the idols, he overturned the marble sculptures, and showed how the temples of the living God were established. Whoever wishes to see the heavens opened, let him hasten to come here, and let not the roughness of the way check his pious desire. It is always through hard labour that we aspire to perfect things, and the path is always narrow that leads to the happy life. When I arrived at that place, I was crushed down under the weight of my sins, but, having shaken them off, I felt myself free. And if, Father Benedict, thou wilt pray for thy Mark, I feel assured I shall go happily forward to that blessed life."[1] After mentioning the kindly care shown by St Benedict in cultivating the mountain of Cassino, he concludes his poem with these words: "Thus dost thou make fruitful even the sterile works of men, by irrigating their arid hearts with the water of salvation. And thus I now implore thee to change into fruit the thorns that sadly lacerate the hard heart of thy Mark."[2]

See, reader, what numbers the spirit of vocation brought, at this time, to the gates of the monastery of St Benedict; see why his first disciples are found, in the ancient martyrologies, adorned with the title of Saints. And such they were, because he who drew them, and kept them fervent in the

[1] "Purgavit sanctus hanc Benedictus humum,
Sculptaque confractis dejecit marmora signis,
Et templum vivo præbuit esse Deo,
Huc properat cælos optat qui cernere apertos,
Nec removet votum semita dura pium.
Semper difficili quæruntur summa labore,
Arctam semper habet vita beata viam.
Huc ego cum scelerum depressus fasce subissem,
Depositum sensi pondus abesse mihi.
Credo quod, et felix vita fruar insuper illa,
Oras pro Marco si Benedicte tuo."

[2] "Sic hominum steriles in fructum dirigis actus,
Sicca salutari flumine corda rigans,
Sic rogo nunc spinas in frugem verte malignas
Quæ lacerant Marci pectora bruta tui."

observance of the Evangelical Counsels, was a man completely shut up within himself, and fixed in the contemplation of God, the fountain of justice. From this habitual vision of God's countenance there flowed a stream of charity upon his head, and diffused itself through the hearts of his disciples, making of them one family. It was like the mystical ointment, which, according to the Psalmist, flowed down from the head upon the beard of Aaron, even to the hem of his garment; it was the dew of Mount Hermon descending upon Mount Sion.[1] Hence it came to pass that the dwelling together of the Brethren resembled the happiness of heaven. This is the reason why Faustus and the other brothers could not take their eyes off their Master; this is why those first monks appeared like angels living in the house of God. The Oratory resounded with their praises, the cloister with the liberal toil of artificers, and the neighbouring towns with the voices of Evangelical preachers, as they were converting men to the truth that elevates us. During the day, the fields, furrowed by the Benedictine plough, opened their bosom to the beautiful sun of the western sky; during the silence of night, after the Work of God—the Psalmody—was done, the monks received, from the hands of the greatest writers in Rome and Greece, their works to transcribe. Thus, around the home of Benedict, there sprung up, silent and unseen, the first shoots of Christian civilisation.

7. When Cæsar Baronius was writing of those times, he pictured to his mind the monastery built by St Benedict on Monte Cassino, the cradle of the Order and the primal Seat of all western monachism, and he saluted it in those words, which it is better for the reader to read, at the foot of the page. I could not produce them in the vernacular, without indulging in a feeling of pride over family glories.[2]

[1] Ps. cxxxii. 2.

[2] "At quis Dei consilium non magnopere admiretur, dum considerat, eodem ferme tempore, quo in Oriente monachismus esset magna ex parte collapsus, compluribus ex iis a fide Catholica ad diversos hæresum errores deficientibus, aliis quoque ab illo vetere instituto rigido in delicias prolabentibus: eodem inquam tempore in Occidente instaurari, atque longe laeque diffundi observantiam monasticæ dis-

More modest is the salutation which perhaps the angels, guardians of this sacred mountain, left to its inhabitants, when, for the first time, they presented before God the first fruits of the first sacrifice of praise, which the sons of St Benedict offered. The inspiration is angelic, though the poet is not ancient; but his verse is sanctified by Benedictine liturgy:—

"Avete, solitudinis,
Claustrique mites incolæ,
Qui pertulistis impios
Cœtus furentis tartari.

Gemmas et auri pondera,
Et dignitatum culmina
Calcastis, et foedissima,
Quae mundus offert, gaudia.

Vobis olus cibaria
Fuere vel legumina,
Potumque lympha præbuit,
Humusque dura lectulum.

Vixistis inter aspides,
Sævisque cum draconibus;

ciplinæ, eamque adeo fœcundo germine propagari, cum velut ex tenui surculo prægrandium exortæ sint frugiferarum arborum silvæ, quæ universam repleverint Occidentalem Ecclesiam extiteritque locuples seminarium ex quo plurimi progressi sint sanctissimi diversarum Ecclesiarum Episcopi; nec defuerint ex iis qui in throno Apostolico considentes, universam Catholicam Ecclesiam, cum vehementiores urgerent fluctus, constantissime gubernarint: progressique ex eodem monachorum ordine sint, qui Apostolico munere complures barbaras nationes, Christi jugum ferre impatientes, tandem ad Christianam fidem sponte capessendam converterint; prodierintque alii qui ob suscepta grandia pro religione certamina sint victores consecuti coronam martyrii. Præterimus modo illos, qui sacrarum rerum scientia nobiles inter scriptores Ecclesiasticos floruere; nec numeramus, quæ numerari vix possint, sacrarum examina virginum; sicut nec facile sit recensere quot ex hoc uno vere dicendo sui humilitate fonticulo immensa flumina sint derivata; quot, inquam, ex Benedicto diversorum ordinum sint progressa agmina monachorum, qui licet diverso nomine in Ecclesia Dei circumamicta varietate censeantur, instituti tamen esse St Benedicti, et ab ipso progredi gloriantur. Hæc tanta tibi hic uno intuito, tamquam immensum cælum in parvo globo descriptum, inspicienda obiter modo proponimus; quo sentias facturos nos operæ pretium, si tanti viri primordia atque progressus, temporum ratione distinctos, quantum licuerit, Annalibus intexamus, atque cum opportuna se occasio dederit, ejusdem contigerit meminisse."

Portenta nec teterrima,
Vos terruere dæmonum.

Rebus procul mortalibus
Mens avolabat fervida,
Divumque juncta coetui,
Haerebat inter sidera."

If the disciples were saints, think what a height of perfection the Master had attained. After having governed, for many years, the monks of the twelve monasteries of Subiaco, and guided them by word and example, and known human nature in its laborious carrying out of the Evangelical counsels, St Benedict wished to embody, under the form of a Rule, the fruit of his experience. There were many Abbots in his time, who governed their monks either by teaching taken from Oriental Rules, or by private judgment, or by local traditions. Their successors did the same. But the monastic family lived a declining life, because its governing principle was wanting—viz., the immutable authority of law, to which both Abbots and their monks are subject. St Benedict established that authority in the book of his Rule, which was afterwards followed by all the monks of the West. I cannot write a commentary on it, for that would take me too far from the path I have traced out for myself in this work, nor could I, through spiritual incapacity, comprehend the heavenly Ideal which led him to compose it. But it is not lawful for me to pass it by, altogether, in silence, for the object of this book forbids it. St Gregory affirms,[1] that whoever wishes to know more intimately the manners and the life of St Benedict, can find how much he has done, in the economy of his Rule, for the holy man could not live otherwise than as he taught. Hence his image is found in those pages, which it becomes the duty of the biographer to interrogate with reverence.

I have said that I feel bound to make some comment on the Rule, but I must give an explanation of the first words, with which the Saint prepares the way for the exposition of

[1] Cap. xxxvi.

his statutes: "Listen, my son, to the precepts of thy Master, and bend down the ear of thy heart, and readily receive the admonitions of thy loving Father." This authority and spiritual paternity St Benedict does not attribute directly to himself, as Abbot. He who—when asked to raise a dead person to life—besought God not to regard his sins, but the Faith of the man who begged for the restoration of his son, was too humble of heart to consider himself a Master or guide of spiritual perfection. The Master and Father, whom he puts at the head of his Rule, is Christ, who forbade His disciples to call any man father and master, as they had one only in heaven. St Benedict, in concluding the statutes of his Rule, is so far from regarding himself as Master and Father, that he calls his work *a small beginning* of a Rule, and gives the name of Father to St Basil, who had preceded him in the East in writing monastic canons.

8. The scope of the Rule of St Benedict, is to bring back the monk, by the labour of obedience, to God, from whom he had departed,[1] through the sloth of disobedience—that is to

[1] Ausculta, O fili, præcepta magistri, et inclina aurem cordis tui, et admonitionem pii Patris libenter excipe, et efficaciter comple: ut ad eum per obedientiæ laborem redeas, a quo per inobedientiæ desidiam recesseras. Ad te ergo nunc meus sermo dirigitur quisquis, abrenuntians propriis voluptatibus, Domino Christo vero regi militaturus, obedientiæ fortissima atque præclara arma sumis. In primis, ut quicquid agendum inchoas bonum, ab eo perfici instantissima oratione deposcas: ut qui nos jam in filiorum dignatus est numero computare, non debeat aliquando de malis actibus nostris contristari. Ita enim ei omni tempore, de bonis suis in nobis parendum est: ut non solum iratus pater suos non aliquando filios exhæredet; sed nec ut metuendus Dominus, irritatus malis nostris, ut nequissimos servos perpetuam tradat ad pœnam, qui eum sequi noluerint ad gloriam.

Exurgamus ergo tandem aliquando, excitante nos Scriptura, ac dicente: *Hora est jam nos de somno surgere.* Et apertis oculis nostris ad deificum lumen, attonitis auribus audiamus, divina quotidie clamans, quid nos admoneat vox dicens: *Hodie, si vocem ejus audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra.* Et iterum: *Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat quid Spiritus dicat Ecclesiis.* Et quid dicit? *Venite, filii, audite me, timorem Domini docebo vos. Currite, dum lumen vitæ habetis: ne tenebræ mortis vos comprehendant.* Et quærens Dominus in multitudine populi, cui hæc clamat, operarium suum, iterum dicit: *Quis est homo, qui vult vitam, et cupit videre dies bonos?* Quod si tu audiens, respondeas, Ego: dicit tibi Deus: *Si vis habere veram, et perpetuam vitam; prohibe linguam tuam a malo, et labia tua ne loquantur dolum. Diverte a malo, et fac bonum: inquire*

say, to reclaim him by abnegation of self. All the baptised ought, by the grace of God, to return to that state from which original sin expelled them, but, not all in the same manner; for it is one thing to imitate Christ, another to follow Him.

pacem, et sequere eam. Et cum hæc feceritis, oculi mei super vos, et aures *meæ ad preces vestras. Et antequam me invocetis, dicam vobis: Ecce adsum.* Quid dulcius nobis hac voce Domini, invitantis nos, fratres charissimi? Ecce pietate sua demonstrat nobis Dominus viam vitæ.

Succinctis ergo fide vel observantia bonorum actuum lumbis nostris, per ducatum Evangelii pergamus itinere ejus: ut mereamur eum, qui nos vocavit in regnum suum, videre. In cujus regni tabernaculo si volumus habitare, nisi illuc bonis actibus curritur, minime pervenitur. Sed interrogemus cum Propheta Dominum, dicentes ei: *Domine quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo: aut quis requiescet in monte sancto tuo?* Post hanc interrogationem, fratres, audiamus Dominum respondentem, et ostendentem nobis viam ipsius tabernaculi, ac dicentem: *Qui ingreditur sine macula, et operatur justitiam: qui loquitur veritatem in corde suo: qui non egit dolum in lingua sua: qui non fecit proximo suo malum: qui opprobrium non accepit adversus proximum suum:* qui malignum diabolum, aliqua suadentem sibi, cum ipsa suasione sua a conspectibus cordis sui respuens, deduxit ad nihilum, et parvulos cogitatus ejus tenuit, et allisit ad Christum: qui timentes Dominum, de bona observantia sua non se reddant elatos: sed ipsa in se bona non a se posse, sed a Domino fieri existimantes, operantem in se Dominum magnificant, illud cum Propheta dicentes: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed Nomini tuo da gloriam.* Sicut nec Paulus Apostolus, de prædicatione sua sibi aliquid imputavit, dicens: *Gratia Dei sum id quod sum.* Et iterum ipse dicit: *Qui gloriatur, in Domino glorietur.* Unde et Dominus in Evangelio ait: *Qui audit verba mea hæc, et facit ea similabo eum viro sapienti, qui aedificavit domum suam supra petram: venerunt flumina, flaverunt venti, et impegerunt in domum illam, et non cecidit; quia fundata erat supra petram.* Hæc complens Dominus, expectat cotidie, his suis sanctis monitis factis nos respondere debere. Ideo nobis, propter emendationem malorum hujus vitæ, dies ad inducias relaxantur, dicente Apostolo: *An nescis, quia patientia Dei ad poenitentiam te adducit?* Nam pius Dominus dicit: *Nolo mortem peccatoris: sed ut convertatur et vivat.* Cum ergo interrogassemus Dominum, fratres, de habitatore tabernaculi ejus, audivimus habitandi præceptum. Sed si compleamus habitatoris officium, erimus haeredes Regni cœlorum. Ergo præparanda sunt corda et corpora nostra, sanctæ præceptorum obedientiæ militanda: et, quod minus habet in nos natura possibile, rogemus Dominum, ut gratiæ suæ jubeat nobis adjutorium ministrare. Et si fugientes gehennæ pœnas, ad vitam perpetuam volumus pervenire; dum adhuc vacat, et in hoc corpore sumus, et hæc omnia per hanc lucis viam vacat implere; currendum, et agendum est modo, quod in perpetuum nobis expediat.

Constituenda est ergo a nobis Dominici schola servitii, in qua institutione nihil asperum, nihil grave nos constituturos speramus. Sed, et si quid paululum restrictius, dictante aequitatis ratione, propter emendationem vitiorum, vel conservationem charitatis, processerit; non illico, pavore perterritus, refugias viam

Imitation is an absolute Precept for all, to follow Him is a Counsel, subordinate to the will of a few. If these embrace it, it becomes a Precept for them ; and we cannot, afterwards, any longer turn to God by the free election of means, but only by that adopted by Christ, the Man-God, who returned triumphant from the sepulchre to Heaven through the Cross. This is the formula of Christian perfection, and only with the Cross upon our shoulders can we tread in the footsteps of Christ. In the Cross is humiliation, obedience even unto death, self-abnegation, immolation of the old man, and the resurrection of the new.

Those who are called by God, by a privilege of grace, to the Cross, are the monks. At the beginning of the Rule, Christ, their Master and Father, calls them to follow Him ; but in the course of the Prologue, those who are sons St Benedict calls brothers, and when he exhorts them he exhorts himself, as a simple monk, for the duty of observing the Rule belongs to all without distinction of office. St Benedict had followed Christ for so many years, with the Cross upon his shoulders, that he had merited, besides the gift of miracles and prophecy, that of having a foretaste of the joys of Paradise. Whilst he imposes that same Cross on the shoulders of his disciples, he feels, in himself, how weak human nature is in bearing it, and hence he thus consoles them, in concluding his Prologue—"We must then establish a school of obedience to Our Lord, in which work we hope to lay down nothing hard or grievous. Yet, if something shall have been enjoined, as suggested by right reason, for the correction of vices or the preservation of charity, do not thou, at once, stricken with fear, flee from the way of salvation, which cannot be entered upon save through a narrow beginning. But in the pursuance of this holy method of life, and

salutis, quæ non est nisi angusto initio incipienda. Processu vero conversationis et fidei, dilato corde, inenarrabili dilectionis dulcedine curritur via mandatorum Dei : ut ab ipsius nunquam magisterio discedentes, in ejus doctrina usque ad mortem in Monasterio perseverantes, passionibus Christi per patientiam participemus ; ut et regni ejus mereamur esse consortes."—Regulae Prologus.

of Faith, with expanded heart and with inexpressible sweetness of love, we shall run the way of the commandments of God; so that, never departing from His government, and persevering unto death in His doctrine, in our monastery, we may participate in the Passion of Christ through patience and merit to be sharers in His Kingdom."[1]

9. The form of the Order of St Benedict is essentially social, like that of the Church. It educates the individual that wishes to follow Christ, because he is a child of the Church, to be a member of that monastic society, which St Benedict himself defines: *Schola divini servitii.* The only true monks, in his times, were the cenobites, living together under a definite Rule, and subject to the will of an abbot, like those whom he found in the solitude of Subiaco; and the anchorets, who, having been trained a long time, in the monastery, to resist the devil, went forth alone, without a companion, and shut themselves up in separate cells, there to engage, with the Divine assistance, in single combat with the vices of the flesh and the spirit. There were others who, counterfeiting monks, went about in twos and threes, and in even greater numbers, without Rule or Abbot; what gratified their desires they called lawful and holy, and what had no charms for them they held as illicit. Others, even more pitiable, were given up to the pleasures of the palate, and wandered about, asking for hospitality at houses and monasteries, and, when refreshed, took their departure, to the great edification, no doubt, of the simple. The former, called *Sarabaites*, were, according to St Benedict, an abominable race of monks; the latter, called "Gyrovagi," were a species

[1] Dante, "Purg.," iv. 88, and following:—

"Ed egli a me: questa montagna è tale,
Che sempre al cominciar di sotto è grave,
E quanto uom più va su, e men fa male.
Però quand'ella ti parrà soave
Tanto, che'l su andar ti sia leggiero,
Come a seconda giù l'andar per nave;
Allor sarai al fin d'esto sentiero;
Quivi di riposar l'affanno aspetta:
Più non rispondo, e questo so per vero."

not to be spoken about. Having swept aside this rubbish of impostors, and praised the anchorets, he chooses the cenobites as the type of the rational monk.

Those persons who came to him, in order to follow Christ, were to leave all things, and to deny themselves; but they had not put aside the noblest prerogative of their nature, their sociability. Therefore, to the society of the family, in which are the germs of all human fellowship, formed of individuals begotten by the *will of the flesh*, St Benedict added that of those *born of God* by Faith.

These believers in Christ, the Man-God, and in the great mystery of Redemption by blood, leaving home, riches, and themselves, hid their lives in Christ, in the words of St Paul. Poverty, chastity, and obedience, to which religious communities always bind themselves, were the logical, spiritual outcome of that life. The *si vis* of Christ produced the family of His followers, in the bosom of the mass of believers, and, as a family, St Benedict received them in the monastery of Monte Cassino; this family he reduced to discipline by his Rule, he ruled it with the authority of Father and Abbot, and propagated it by the power of his example. The family of the cenobites is called, by St Benedict, the most steadfast[1] kind of monks, on account of the unity of their head, the unity of their law, their bond of cohesion through charity, and by the individual perfection that results from all this.

10. The Abbot is the Father of this family. Of what virtues, of how much charity, of how great prudence he ought to be possessed, St Benedict explains in his Rule,[2] so that the whole sum of the authority is placed in his hands, and of him will be required the solemn account of the spiritual life and death of his flock. His duties touch individuals and the social structure of his family. If they are diligent, he must be meek and kind; if troublesome and rebellious, he must be stern and a prompt inflicter of punishment; but he must behave in such a manner, that the name of Father shall not be a false title; he must be irreprehensible, so as not to belie

[1] Reg., cap. i. [2] *Ibid.*, cap. ii.

his position. He must be a master of deeds, rather than of words; a rigid dispenser of justice, not regarding persons, but merit; having no favourites, through mere natural instinct; not giving an unreasonable preference to the noble before the slave, because, whether slaves or free, we are all one in Christ, and all, being under one Lord, bear the same yoke of servitude. The Abbot is the centre to which the wills of the monks converge, by the duty of obedience; nevertheless, he is not a lawless autocrat. The fear of the Divine Judge, who will require from him an account of the souls, of which he is the guardian, but not the master, moderates, bends, and adapts his will to the disposition, age, and needs of his subjects, so that, by a kind solicitude, he is a true Father to them.

St Benedict does not wish him to be either an unchecked or a silent judge, in the affairs of the monastery. If these affairs are of grave importance, let him call the whole congregation of monks together, and let him hear each one's opinion;[1] for, as he says, God often reveals to the youngest what is best to be done; if there is question of settling matters of lighter moment, the counsel of the Seniors is sufficient. Let the Abbot use, but not be over-ruled by, the counsel of the monks, who, keeping their eyes upon the Rule, the mistress of all, must not idolize their own views, and contend stubbornly with the Abbot; he it is who must determine, in the fear of God, what is the wise thing to do. It was a salutary provision to call the brethren to council, before settling the business of the monastery. Men who, to follow Christ, had left country and home, were to find another in the monastery, entirely of a spiritual nature. The monks called to council by St Benedict, were to be men who should consult how to discover the means of best preserving the life of the community; to this every effort was to be directed. For the monastery is their country, their family; and, for this reason, St Benedict wishes them to be cenobites, not hermits.

[1] Reg., cap. iii.

11. He chose, with the advice of the more perfect monks, the Præpositus of the monastery, who, inasmuch as he was over the others, was to be a rigid observer of the Rule. St Benedict does not assign to him any definite duties ; he only says that he must follow out reverently whatever the Abbot imposes upon him, and must do nothing against his will and commands. But this is sufficient to show that he was, as it were, the minister of the mind of the Abbot, when present, and took his place, when at a distance ; if proud and a despiser of the Rule, and incorrigible, he was to be expelled from the monastery by the Abbot, who, mindful of the judgment of God, must not let himself be carried away by jealousy of authority, or intemperate zeal. To the office of carrying into effect the Abbot's orders, and watching over their fulfilment, the Seniors and Deans were also deputed. Chosen, not by reason of age, but by virtuous merit and wisdom, the Abbot shall divide the burthen of his ministry with them.[1] Being his ordinary counsellors, they shall watch, day and night, over the observance of the Rule ; they shall censure and admonish the culpable, in private, and see to their necessities.

The whole congregation of monks shall be divided into decuries, over each of which shall preside a Dean, over the Deans the Præpositus, over all the Abbot, and over him the Rule ; so that, through the moral body of the monastic family, there shall ever run a vein of paternal authority, the vigilant dispenser of social justice.

St Benedict, with equal charity and justice, provides for the safety of the soul and body of his monks ; he does not mar his care by an excess of zeal, but tempers, with wonderful discretion, the arduous nature of the Evangelical Counsels by a consideration for the weakness of human nature. In order that the nobleness of the design of following Christ may not dull the remembrance of the Evangelical Precepts, he brings them to mind, and makes them a preparation for the sublimer teachings of the monastic life.[2]

12. These matters having been arranged, he describes, with

[1] Cap. xxi. [2] Cap. iv.

much lucidity of form, the path in which a true monk ought to walk.[1] Humility and obedience, the power and act of the Evangelical life, make up the synthetic formula of the life of Christ, who humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.[2] In this formula is contained the whole historical cycle of the Redemption, and triumphal return to heaven of the sinning human race, and the drama of the interior abnegation of Christ's followers. St Benedict symbolises this by Jacob's ladder, on which angels descended and ascended, in which alternation of abasement and elevation, the whole life of his monks consists. Of this mystic ladder he enumerates twelve steps, by using which the monk, having torn up by the roots the evil plant of pride, restores, within himself, the work of creation, vitiated by original sin, and submits his neck to the yoke of obedience, which is that of Christ. By this submission he completes the sacrifice of himself. He gives up everything, his will, affections, riches, and pleasures; and, on the altar of this great immolation, he, now a new man, is transfigured in the sight of the angels and men. This is an unbloody martyrdom, which the Abbot, become all to all, watches over and directs, sustaining the weak, reproving the imperfect, and always teaching by the word of example.

13. But, because God alone can give increase to such great virtue by the gifts of His grace, St Benedict has composed the sweet liturgy of common prayer, the Psalmody. This is the noblest and the holiest act of the monk's life, and nothing has to be preferred before it. At the signal which calls the brethren to perform it, every other work must be interrupted and left.[3] St Benedict arranges the order and number of the Psalms and the hours of the day and night, at which the monks shall assemble for it in the Oratory, so that, during the course of the week, the entire Psalter is recited; and he lays down only two canons for its decorous and meritorious recital,—faith in the presence of God and the angels, and concord of voice and heart. Without this concord, there is

[1] Caps. v., vi. [2] Cap. vii. [3] Cap. xliii.

no Psalmody. The recitation ought to be clear, sonorous, precise, and strong, without sighs; and, in the grandeur of its unison, which is more powerful than the charms of harmony, it forms an image of the terrible onset of a serried host against the powers of darkness. A concordant Psalmody was always a certain sign of peace in monasteries. He wished the singing of the Psalmody to be grave and melodious; but the reading and singing were to be allotted to those only, who could do them with edification to the hearers;[1] hence it was that there was a school of singing in the monastery. Divine service being finished, all must leave the Oratory, with the greatest silence, so as not to disturb anyone who wished to remain for private prayer, and not to distract him. He wished that these private prayers should not be said in a loud voice, but with tears and affection of the heart.[2] He did not like ascetical hysteria, or prolonged prayers. "Not in much speaking," he says, "but in purity of heart and compunction, are we heard." Therefore prayer ought to be pure and short, unless it be prolonged by a Divine impulse of inspiration. However, in the assembly of the brethren, it must, by all means, be short; and, when the signal is given by the Prior, all must rise together.[3] Obedience is better than prayer. But the Psalmody is the most beautiful and the most fruitful of prayers. That uniform elevation of the mind to God put all on an equality in His sight; the weak, supported by the strong, the novices by the more advanced—all received the same reward from the Father of the family, who is in heaven, and who made them quick, vigorous, swift runners in the way of His command-

[1] Cap. xlvii.

[2] "Expleto Opere Dei, omnes cum summo silentio exeant, et agatur reverentia Deo, ut Frater qui forte sibi peculiariter vult orare, non impediatur alterius improbitate . . . non in clamosa voce, sed in lachrymis et intentione cordis."—Cap. lii.

[3] "Non in multiloquio, sed in puritate cordis et compunctione lachrymarum nos exaudiri sciamus. Et ideo brevis debet esse et pura oratio: nisi forte ex effectu inspirationis divinæ gratiæ protendatur. In conventu tamen omnino brevietur oratio; et, facto signo a Priore, omnes pariter surgant."—Cap. xx.

ments. Hence, as each went forth from the Oratory, he took with him that joy of heart which, according to St Benedict, made sweet the yoke of Jesus Christ, and gave such peace as the world knows not.

14. Obedience, poverty, chastity, and the work of God, are the dogmatic part of the Benedictine Rule ; every other law regulating the monk's life is disciplinary. The power of prohibition and permission is in the will of the Abbot, who is the prudent discerner of times, places, and the disposition, of each of his spiritual subjects. Hence the monastic legislation had nothing of the hardness of the Judaic. Its laws, before they touched the will of the monk, were pondered over in the mind of the Abbot, who adapted and accommodated them to the disposition and strength of his subjects. St Benedict is a severe guardian of the vow of poverty : the vice of propriety is so fatal to the spiritual life of the monk, that he wishes to have it extirpated from his monasteries. To give or receive, without the Abbot's permission, is a most grave fault, and what the Abbot grants to a monk for his use he must not consider his own, neither a book, nor small table, nor pen (the utensils for writing), nor, in a manner, his own body nor his own will. The words *mine* and *thine* are banished from the heart and the lips ; everything is common to all, and everything comes through the hands of the Abbot. This was a salutary law for binding together the spiritual framework of the monastic family, and necessary even for the social Apostolate, for which St Benedict was destined by God. He would not have been able to approach the natural family and the civil community, with a moral force composed of individuals possessing earthly goods : from the strife between *mine* and *thine*, there could not have come the order and Christian peace which had to be infused into the members of a society, educated, by barbarians, only to the worship of arrogance and force. All were poor; but each, in particular, and all, in common, possessed one thing alone, of which, even if they had wished it, they could not be despoiled,—the heart of their Father St Benedict. In this they found,

increased a hundredfold by charity, what they had lost by obedience.

15. Having satisfied the duty of the Work of God, the monk was then entirely given up to that of sinful man—labour. The disciples of St Benedict, on their way to the height of perfection, were always sons of Adam, not yet in possession of their Heavenly country, but ever journeying on to it. Their hearts were on high, but their feet yet trod this sinful earth. Before sin entered into the world, the earth was a paradise of pleasure, to be cultivated by innocent man. Labour, with innocence,—these two produced that pleasure. But, when labour became corrupted by pride, then sin and labour generated thorns and briers. The grace of Redemption changed labour into the material of expiation, without which there can be no return to God. Therefore it was that the monks, led on by St Benedict, were to labour, and to labour with fatigue, in order that they might eat their bread in *sudore vultus*, through fatigue of body and obedience. St Benedict banishes idleness from the monastery, as the enemy of the soul, and hence he commands that, at certain times, the monks should be employed in manual labour, and, at others, in the reading of Divine things. Under the name of reading he designated both spiritual reading (*lectione divina*) and the particular study of some scientific subject (*lectionibus suis*). At those times, when they had books in their hands, one or two seniors had to watch over them, in order to keep away and punish any idle and talkative brother, lest such an one should be useless to himself, and disturb the studies of others. During these hours of study no one was allowed to talk with others, except those who were appointed to the various offices of the monastery. To the negligent and slothful, who did not wish or were not able to meditate or read, something else was given to be done, that they might not be idle, and he wished that even the infirm or weak brethren

[1] "Omnis qui reliquerit domum . . . propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet, et vitam æternam possidebit."—Matthaei, cap. xix. 29.

[2] "Otiositas inimica est animæ," cap. xlviii.

should, for the same reason, have some work assigned them, which would keep them from idleness, and not fatigue them too much, the Abbot having to take into account their weakness. Amongst the different kinds of manual labour he placed work in the fields, such as gathering in the wheat, which labour they ought not to find distasteful, for "then," he said, "are they true monks, if they strive to live by the labour of their hands, like the ancient Fathers and Apostles."[1] He commands, lastly, that all things should be done with moderation (*mensurate*), for the sake of the faint-hearted.

The labour was, then, arranged and imposed at the discretion of the Abbot, for not all were suited for study, not all for the arts, not all for field labour; there is no law in the Rule which absolutely obliges a monk to any definite work. And I believe that those who have thought that agricultural labour belongs to the essence of the Benedictine life, excluding from the monastery mental pursuits, have made a great mistake. If the reader wishes to see the reason of this, which appears clear from the text of the Rule, and from the whole history of the Benedictine Order, let him go to the great Mabillon's work,[2] on "Monastic Studies," which triumphantly confutes this austere opinion. Woe to the monuments of ancient learning, if the Benedictines had laid aside books, to give themselves entirely to the pick-axe and spade! The wheat would have been preserved, but what would have become of Cicero and Virgil? In overcoming the unruliness of the senses, and the incontinence of the imagination, St Jerome found mental, more efficacious than bodily, fatigue. "When I was a young man," he wrote, "surrounded by the solitude of the desert, not being able to subdue the temptations of sin and the ardour of nature, which I tried to allay by frequent fastings, and my mind being set on fire by bad thoughts, I placed myself as a pupil under a converted Jew

[1] "Quia tunc vere Monachi sunt, si labore manuum suarum vivunt, sicut et Patres nostri et Apostoli. Omnia tamen mensurate fiant, propter pusillanimes." —Cap. xlviii.

[2] *De Studiis Monasticis.* See also Martène, Commentarius in Reg. S. B., cap. xlviii.

to learn the Hebrew alphabet. . . ." He endured the severest fatigue, which availed more than fastings and the scourge in gaining a victory over himself, as he says : "I thank the Lord that now I am gathering the sweet fruits of the bitter seed of Letters." [1]

It cannot be denied, however, that in the ancient monasteries, either to procure the necessaries of life or for the exercise of humility and obedience, the monks gave themselves to manual labour in the fields, so that agriculture was much benefited in those wild times. And, in St Gregory's narrative, St Benedict exemplifies these virtues, by leading forth his monks into the fields, for manual labour.[2] The monk Mark, in his verse, says that Monte Cassino makes an honourable return to the Saint, for having brought cultivation to its heights. "Thou changest," he says, "the arid lands into smiling gardens, and coverest the barren mountain with fruitful shoots, and the rock marvels at the wheat crops and fruits that are not its own, and the wood becomes green with waving apple trees." [3] The mere sight of St Benedict, a most noble Roman, with the two sons of the patricians, Tertullus and Equitius, and the monastic agriculturists, was, as it were, a programme of free men's labour, unknown in those days of slavery, when the inequality of riches and power divided the anathema of the first sin : "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread," assigning the "bread" to the strong and the rich, and the "sweat of the brow" to the poor and the weak, or to the slave. In the hands of St Benedict, the agriculturist, the punishment again became one, and the

[1] Ep. 4.

[2] Dialog., cap. xxxii.

[3] "Hunc mons ipse tamen juste tibi reddit honorem
Qui meruit tantum, te decorante, bonum.
Arida tu cujus hortis componis amenis
Nudaque fœcundo palmite saxa tegis.
Mirantur scopuli fruges, et non sua poma,
Pomiferisque viret silva soluta comis.
Sic hominum steriles in fructum dirigis actus,
Sicca salutari flumine corda rigans.
Sic rogo nunc spinas in frugem verte malignas
Quæ lacerant Marci pectora bruta tui."

—Appendix Chron. Casin.

manual labour of the monks was the first blow of the axe given to the tree of slavery. Nor did the Saint leave the plough after the rich offerings of Tertullus, for, as St Gregory says in his narrative regarding the colloquy of St Benedict with his sister St Scholastica, they met *in possessione monasterii.* He possessed and laboured; yet he did not labour for the necessaries of life, but for the sake of example, and to fulfil the debt of penance. Nevertheless, not all were destined, nor at all times, for the cultivation of the fields. For, as the brethren had to serve one another,[1] there were many offices which had to be attended to; hence monks, not paid servants, were appointed to the kitchen, serving at table, care of the sick, attending to the monastery door, care of the utensils, divers arts[2] of domestic utility, and the reception of guests. The library demanded more officials than the other departments, because the common and private readings required a number of books, proportioned to the number of the monks. At the beginning of Lent alone it was necessary to have as many books in hand, as would furnish each monk with his Lenten reading.[3] Hence, not a few monks were required for transcribing these.

And here I pause to give the reason why, in the short prologue to this history, I have glorified St Benedict as the preserver of ancient learning and the monuments of pagan literature. There is no doubt that his monks transcribed them, and that, by this means, they have come down to us; but it is not clear that these worthy scribes had a justifying reason for their work, in the Rule which they followed. In this there is no direction to pursue profane studies, nor to transcribe the Greek and Latin classics, in order to save them from perishing. St Benedict does not mention them in the public readings, which were of Divine things, nor in the private (*lectionibus suis*) is there a word about them. How-

[1] Cap. xxxv.

[2] "Artes diversæ intra monasterium exerceantur, ut non sit necessitas monachi vagandi foris."—Cap. lxvi.

[3] Cap. xlviii.

ever, in the Rule, there is a fact which, without entering into erudite researches to justify the words used in the prologue, is enough to show us that not only the monks applied themselves to studies of profane literature, but that they had a school for such studies, even from the time of their Founder. He received little boys and youths into the monastery, to educate them for the monastic life, and he often speaks of them in his Rule, and of the manner of governing them. When Tertullus and Equitius brought him their little sons, Maurus and Placid, they wished that they should be educated for God,—that is to say, that their infantile minds should receive the necessary food of science, in order to make them acceptable to God, to whom they offered them; thus they were the first *alumni* of Benedictine monachism. To have placed them in the hands of some one who would have educated the heart in order to make saints of them, without also educating the mind, lest it should lapse into a rude state of ignorance, would scarcely have been fulfilling the wishes of their parents. Around those *pueri* were logically associated the ideas of schools, books, transcribers, masters, and Greek and Latin models, the only sources of their literary education. If St Benedict had not received the oblations of those two patricians, and of all those who imitated them, the Latin classics would not have found an abode in a house of ascetics. The Benedictine *pueri* opened the door to them. Those, therefore, who, besides the common spiritual reading, gave themselves also to private study, were precisely the pedagogues of those little monks, who read, interpreted, and transcribed, the Latin models, in order to prepare themselves for understanding the language of the Fathers, and the Liturgy of the Church. A beautiful testimony in favour of these profane studies, in Benedictine monasteries, is given by Abbot Bernard of Monte Cassino, who, in the thirteenth century, was banished by Charles I. of Anjou, and took refuge in this abbey, which he rendered illustrious by his learning and deeds. In his Commentary on St Benedict's Rule (which is found in Codex 440 of the Cassinese MSS.), at the end of chapter iv., regarding the

sacred reading of the monks, he writes: "Some persons have taken occasion from this to affirm that it is not lawful for monks to study Grammar or Logic. But if such studies are pursued with the intention of discovering the true sense of Holy Scripture, I consider them not only lawful, but, on account of their object, even holy." Having, then, before his mind the intention of educating in Latin Literature the boys who were placed in the monastery, the monk found, in the Rule of St Benedict, not only the permission to have in hand and transcribe the Latin classics, but also the duty to compose grammars, glossaries, and Latin chrystomathies, in order to incite the young mind to the imitation of the classics. Hence it happens that codices yet exist among the MSS. which come down to the ninth century.[1] But the Cassinese library had a great number of them in the sixteenth century, as is clear from a series of MSS. at Monte Cassino, discovered in the Vatican codex marked 3961, by the illustrious Abbot Cozza.[2]

For such laborious men St Benedict, with wonderful kindness, makes ample provision in all the temporal necessities of life, not taking the standard or measure from himself, but from the weakness of human nature. He assigns, for the monk's daily refection, two cooked dishes and a third of fruits, or herbs, and even more, according to the will of the Abbot, if the monks have had to endure more than usual fatigue. A pound of bread and a hemina of wine are allowed, to be increased according to the nature of the place, the amount of

[1] Bernardus Abbas in Cap. iv. *Regulæ.* "*Lectiones sanctas libenter audire.* Quando dixit *lectiones*, addit sanctas, ut excludat vanas et noxias et inutiles vel dampnosas. *Libenter* dicit, ut animam applicet ad intelligendum et ad memoriæ commendandum. *Audire* posuit, quoniam quidam vel propter oculorum debilitatem aut senectutem non possunt legere, quia non bene possunt videre. Unde ne talis excusetur, ait *audire* non legere. Praeterea quidam ex hoc occasionem sumpserunt quod monachum in gramatica vel logica studere non licet, sed si est ejus intentio, ut ideo artes istas legat ut sacram scripturam intelligat, lectionem non judico illicitam, sed propter intentionem existimo sanctam."

[2] *Catalogus Codicum MSS. quos Bibliotheca Casinensis habebat, anno* 1532. In this catalogue are 76 codices of grammar, 14 vocabularies, 15 of logic, 11 of philosophy.

labour, and the summer heats; but, with due regard to temperance, St Benedict observes that, although he finds in books the use of wine is forbidden to monks, nevertheless he grants it, as it was not possible, in his time, to persuade them to go without it.[1] If, in some places, it is found that the full measure cannot be had, but only less, the monks who live there must bless God, and not give way to murmuring.

There is yet preserved, at Monte Cassino, among the holy relics, the pound-weight of the bread assigned to the monk by St Benedict in his Rule. This precious treasure, of the sixth century, is of turned bronze, with a ring at the top to hang by; it is Roman work, a kilo and 15 grammes in weight. It is well for the reader to know with what jealousy the monks have preserved this weight down to our own day.

St Benedict, though meek of spirit, was especially severe against three vices,—idleness, propriety, and murmuring. To the first he opposed labour, to the second community of all things, to the third the watchful care of the Abbot in all that was necessary for the monk's life. Hence he did not wish to leave to the will of the Præpositus, or of the Cellarer, the quality and quantity of the clothing and food, but would fix them himself, and put them under the guarantee of the law. Wherefore those Cassinese, who escaped the Lombard devastation, and repaired to the Lateran in Rome, being suddenly attacked in the night by those barbarians, saved nothing and carried nothing away except the original copy of the Rule, the bread-weight, the wine-measure, and some utensils.

Their Abbot Bonito, a disciple of St Benedict, deposited that weight in the Lateran monastery; and Pope Gregory II, in veneration of him who first had it in his hands, ordered to be engraved upon it these words: *Pondus libræ panis St Benedicti.* The monks having returned to their seat of Monte Cassino, under the Abbot Petronax, Pope Zachary, successor of Gregory, who, it appears, had become possessed of the weight, restored it to the Cassinese, and, having been

[1] "Sed quia nostris temporibus id monachis persuaderi non potest."—Cap. xl.

put in the *vestiarium*, it was preserved down to the time of Peter, the Deacon (the twelfth century). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was lost amid the plundering of the *sansculottes*, and was finally recovered[1] in 1879. There is no doubt of its authenticity, on account of the silver inscription of Gregory II, the letters of which are of the eighth century.

[1] Our industrious Dom Anselmo M. Caplet, who first read the commentary of Peter the Deacon on chapter xxxix. of St Benedict's Rule (which is found in the Cassinese Codex marked 257, p. 544 and foll.), in which he narrates the history of this treasure, and which we here cite :

"*Panis libra una propensa sufficiat in die, sive una sit refectio, sive prandii et cene. Quod si cenaturi sunt de eadem libra tertia pars a cellerario reservetur reddenda cenaturis.*

"Pondus quoque panis ut Paulus hujus cenobii Casinensis diaconus in epistola quam ad Carolum imperatorem misit testatur quattuor librarum est. Quod ne quis autumet me id mendose dixisse, ipsius epistole verba hic inseram. Direximus quoque pondo quattuor librarum, ad cujus equalitatem ponderis panis debeat fieri. Qui quaternas quadras singularum librarum justa sacre regule textum possit dividi, quod pondus sicut ab ipso patre est institutum in hoc est loco repertum. Hoc igitur pondus temporibus Pelagii pape incenso a Langobardis hoc Casinensi cenobio, a Bonito sancti patris Benedicti discipulo in Lateranensi cenobio depositum, et a papa Gregorio iuniore qui nomen suum inibi litteris argenteis describi iusserat, per successorem suum Zachariam in hoc loco redditum, ac in vestiario fratrum usque in hodiernum diem perdurat. Solidorum vero quantitas beati patris Benedicti temporibus numero quadraginta denariorum computabatur, et generaliter hec solutio, usque ad tempora Karoli magni perduravit. Postea autem Ludovicus imperator anno dominice incarnationis octingentesimo septimodecimo, imperii vero sui anno quarto, cum in domo Aquisgrani palatii cum quampluribus Francie abbatibus resideret, constituit ut libra panis triginta sex solidis, per duodecim denarios metiatur. De hoc vero pondere quidam doctor ait medius panis pensans libram, singulis fratribus in die sufficiat. secundum formam dispensationis, cum medium panis celestis corvus Paulo servo Dei cotidie ad vescendum paraverit. Quando ergo ad sextam horam tempore estivo vel aliis temporibus reficiant, tertia quadra ipsius dominici panis a cellerario pro omnium anona in cellario subtracto sero ante illum crudum pulmentarium inferendum mensis ponantur. Quod autem dicitur *panis libra una propensa* ante pensata vel librata intelligitur.

"Nam et supradictum pulmentum a pulte nomen est derivatum. Sive enim sola pulta pultis, sive aliud quod ejusdem permistionis ordine componitur, et summitas pulmentum proprie dicitur. Leguminum autem nascentium intelliguntur germina que cum aceto vel aliis fructibus composita ad comedendum sunt apta. hec est autem perfecta et rationabilis abstinentia quando homo spiritualis effectus, angelis coniungitur. deoque liberius copulatur. Per abstinentiam occulta misteriorum celestia revelantur, divinique sacramenti archana panduntur. Set qui abstinet a cibis necesse est abstineat a corporalibus et noxiis vitiis."

Some one may think the quantity of bread assigned by St Benedict to each monk too large, but it must be observed that the kilo and the 15 grammes of bread, (such is the amount of the bronze pound-weight of which we are speaking), were meant to sustain the strength of men engaged in field work, and they had no other kinds of food. St Benedict defined the quantity of bread without any precept to eat it all. Were they not so poor and hunger-stricken, especially in those times, that they would gather up the fragments that were left?

16. In the matter of food all kindness was shown towards the old and children. "Although human nature itself is inclined to be compassionate," he says, "to the old and children, nevertheless let the authority also of the Rule look to them. Let their weakness, therefore, always be taken into account, and, with regard to food, let the rigour of the Rule be relaxed. Let there be a kind consideration towards them, and let them have food before the regular hours."[1] For the same reason, the flesh of quadrupeds, forbidden to those in health, is allowed to the sick and weak. Having regard also, not only to what is necessary, but also to the preservation of health, St Benedict permits the use of baths to his monks; this is allowed less frequently to those in health, and to the young, but always to the sick, if it is needful.[2]

17. St Benedict wishes the Abbot to distribute what is necessary for the monk, in the way of clothing and sleep, in order that he may not fall into the vice of propriety, by providing for himself. In this matter, the nature of the place, and the climate, in which the monasteries are, must be taken into consideration, in order to regulate the clothing accordingly.

[1] "Licet ipsa natura humana trahatur ad misericordiam in his aetatibus, senum videlicet et infantum; tamen et Regulae auctoritas eis prospiciat. Consideretur semper in eis imbecillitas et nullatenus in eis districtio Regulæ teneatur in alimentis: sed sit in eis pia consideratio, et præveniant horas canonicas."—Cap. xxxvii.

[2] "Balneorum usus infirmis, quoties expedit, offeratur. Sanis autem et maxime iuvenibus, tardius concedatur."—Cap. xxxvi.

In temperate climates, it is sufficient for the monk that he should have a tunic, a scapular, falling down before and behind, and fastened at the sides to prevent it being soiled during manual labour ; a hood to cover his head ; a cowl, more woolly in the spring ; he must have his feet covered and wear shoes. St Benedict does not wish his monks to have any discussion regarding the colour or thickness of their clothing ; they must use the material of the country, and that which is cheap. He wishes the dress to be of fitting proportions, neither too long nor too short, and not of grotesque shape ; and the monk, who has to go out of the monastery, must put on a neater and cleaner dress, in order, perhaps, not to make a vain show of poverty.[1] Let the monk have in his possession two tunics and two cowls, in order that he may have an opportunity of washing them. In a word, poverty, cleanliness, decorum.

The bed was a piece of matting with a rough woollen covering, or one of goatskin, a cloak in which the sleepers wrapped themselves, and a bolster. They all slept in their clothes, in one apartment or dormitory, if it could be done ; if not, they were divided into tens, under the surveillance of a Senior or Dean. The younger brethren slept in a separate dormitory, having their beds distributed among those of the Deans, who, being always present, watched over them. The dormitories were lighted by a lamp, which burned all night.[2]

18. Each one, therefore, received what was necessary, not according to the caprice of the Præpositi, but according to the nature of his peculiar needs, and as the Abbot alone judged fit. The Abbot had an official under him, called the Cellarer, to whom was committed the custody of the utensils, the care of the property of the monastery, and the distribution of the

[1] "Et cuculla et tunicae sint aliquanto a solito quas habent, modice meliores, quas exeuntes in via accipiant de vestiario, et revertentes restituant."—Cap. lv.

[2] "Si potest fieri, omnes in uno loco dormiant ; sin autem multitudo non sinit, deni aut viceni cum senioribus qui super eos solliciti sint, pausent Candela jugiter in eadem cella ardeat usque mane. . . . Adolescentiores fratres juxta se non habeant lecta, sed permixti cum senioribus."—Cap. xxii.

provisions and clothes. He was chosen by the will of the Abbot, but with the suffrages of the congregation. He was to be a man of shrewd and ripe manners, not a great eater, not proud, not turbulent, not unjust, not niggardly nor prodigal, but fearing God and acting as a father to the whole congregation; solicitous in giving, kind and reasonable in refusing. He was to do everything according to the will of the Abbot; he was to be all kindness towards the sick, the young, guests, and the poor; he was to care for the things of the monastery, as if they were the sacred vessels of the altar.[1]

19. The reader, remembering the strict life which St Benedict led in the cave at Subiaco, will easily understand that he wished to have monks formed to his own likeness, and that the monastery should be an abode of beings, among whom nothing human remained. There was silence, and measure in will and acts, and a rigid restraint in all the relations of life. The monotonous round of men and things would appear, to anyone without Faith, a senseless martyrdom, which, instead of awakening minds to the vision of Heavenly Ideals, sank them down into the dull torpor and inertness of matter. Men, united together by the bonds of charity and labour, were not able to observe perpetual silence, nor to live, dissociated among themselves, and freed from those duties of social intercourse, without which the monks would have been hermits, and not cenobites, as St Benedict wished them to be. He forbade excess in speech, even on holy and edifying subjects, because, according to the Scripture,[2] in much speaking sin shall not be wanting. He forbids unbecoming words,[3] and those that are superfluous, even in asking what is necessary from the Præpositus. Always, and in every place, he forbids words of buffoonery, gossip, and words

[1] Cap. xxxi.

[2] "In multiloquio non deerit peccatum."—Prov. ch. x. 19.

[3] "A malis verbis . . . debet cessari . . . ; si qua requirenda sunt a Priore, cum omni humilitate et subjectione reverentiæ requirantur. Scurrilitates vero vel verba otiosa et risum moventia aeterna clausura in omnibus locis damnamus, et ad talia eloquia discipulum aperire os non permittimus."—Cap. vi.

that move to loud laughter; in short, he forbids words which violate the virtue of silence, whether it be in abstaining from all conversation that is injurious to the salvation of the soul, or unsuited to the character of places and times. But Father Martène, a most learned commentator of the Rule of St Benedict, states that amongst the ancient monks silence was rigorously imposed only in the Church and refectory.[1] Nor did men of holy life, like Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, consider it a fault to season their familiar discourse occasionally with facetious words. St Bernard expresses his astonishment, without being scandalised, at this, when writing to him: "I do not know how, in joking, you can moderate your conversation in such a way that pleasantry does not savour of levity, and the maintaining of authority does not lessen the pleasure of recreation."[2] Lastly, St Benedict forbids talking after Complin, and conversation among the brethren at unseasonable times. The prohibition shows that at other times they spoke and conversed together, not after a worldly fashion, but as became monks.

They were not constrained to remain isolated within the confines of the monastery; they went out either for the sake of labour or to transact some business imposed on them,[3] but never at their own will and without leave of the Abbot. Those at a distance were accompanied by the prayers of the other brethren;[4] on their return they made amends, by prostrating in the Oratory, for any fault committed on the way; and they were to make no mention to the others of the evil things they had heard or seen outside, for fear of some harm being done thereby.[5] If those who went out were able to return during the course of the day, they were not allowed,

[1] Martène, p. 192.

[2] "Nescio siquidem quomodo inter jocandum ita disponitis sermones vestros, ut et jocus levitatem non redoleat, et auctoritas conservata hilaritatis non minuat gratiam."

[3] Cap. li. "Frater qui pro quovis responso dirigitur."

[4] Hence, at the conclusion of the *Benedictine Canonical Hours*, to "Divinum auxilium maneat semper nobiscum," is added: *Et cum fratribus nostris absentibus. Amen.*

[5] Cap. lxvii.: "Quia plurima destructio est."

without permission of the Abbot, to accept an invitation to table. Therefore, more respectably clothed, they went on their way, accompanied by the prayers of the others, and followed by the eye of the Abbot, who watched over them as if they were present.

In the monastery the status of the brethren was regulated by the Abbot according to merit and the time of their conversion, or of their entrance into the Order. Those who came first took their place before those who came later, in order to avoid strife for precedence. Even priests were subject to this ordination.[1] But in the offices of mutual charity all were brothers, and were called by no other title.

The seniors, through filial respect, had the title "Reverend Father"; the Abbot alone had that of "Domnus," not through servile flattery, but for reverence and love of Christ, whose vicegerent he was. And let him, says St Benedict, so behave and comport himself as to render himself worthy of such honour. A young brother, when he meets a Senior, must ask his blessing; if the Senior be present, let the Junior arise and give him place, and not sit down unless bidden to do so. They vied with each other in mutual acts of obedience, and in bearing patiently with each other's infirmities, whether mental or bodily. No one preferred his own pleasure to that of his neighbour; the brotherly duties of mutual help were interchanged with a chaste love, and all obeyed the Abbot with a humble and sincere submission. They were to fear God, and love their Abbot with a respectful affection.[2] But the monk was forbidden to defend or make himself the protector of an offending brother, whether he was a relation or not, because this would be the occasion of grave scandal.[3]

20. Of the same importance as the Divine service were regarded those to be rendered to guests, because St Benedict wished that in them Christ should be venerated, who has said, "I was a stranger and you took me in."[4] Therefore the receiving of guests was to be not only kind with a worldly

[1] Cap. lxiii. [2] Caps. lxix., lxx., lxxi., lxxii. [3] Cap. lxix.
[4] "Hospes eram et collegistis me."—Matt. xxv. 35.

courtesy, but also made sacred by a liturgical formality. When guests arrived, the Præpositus and the brethren went to meet them, but the kiss of peace was not given until they had prayed together for a short time. They were therefore conducted to the Oratory, and the Abbot, or some one deputed by him, sitting with them, read for their edification some part of the Scriptures, and then every kindness was shown them. The Abbot or the Præpositus poured water on the hands of the guests, and the Abbot, in the presence of the whole community, washed their feet; all then arose reciting the Psalm: *We have received Thy mercy, O God, in the midst of Thy Temple.*[1] The kitchen of the guests was separated from that of the brethren, and the Abbot was always to take his meals with the guests and strangers, having the power also, when no guests[2] were present, to invite, when he pleased, one of the brethren to his table. St Benedict directs that those who are to be received with special attention are pilgrims who come for motives of piety, and the poor, as in them especially Christ is received, the rich drawing honour to themselves through fear. Their rooms were provided with convenient beds, and were taken care of by a monk who had the fear of God.

St Benedict observes that in his time guests were never wanting in the monastery.[3] They came there either for reasons of business or religion, and were strangers, or they came to ask for food or spiritual counsel, as will be seen in the course of this work. But the principal cause of attraction to so many persons was St Benedict himself, to whom they were drawn, even from distant places, by the fame of his virtues and charity, and by the pious desire of listening to such a Master of spiritual things. The holy Bishop of Canosa, Sabinus, Servandus the Deacon, with his monks, the Saint's own sister Scholastica, and the brother of the monk Valentinus, are the only ones mentioned by St Gregory, who, during the course of the year, went to St Benedict to venerate him and receive spiritual consolation; but we may conjecture

[1] Ps. xlvii. 10. [2] Cap. liii. See Martène's commentary on this chapter.
[3] Cap. liii.: "Hospites qui nunquam desunt in Monasterio.

that guests of this kind were very numerous. Nor was there a less number of the poor and of those suffering from hunger, and pestilence, and the devastations of the terrible Totila, who betook themselves to Monte Cassino in order to find their only refuge in the heart of the man of God during such a desperate state of human affairs. Thus through these guests the fame went abroad of the holy life of these monks, and of the admirable organisation of their community; and many, like Mark the Poet, feeling their souls burdened with sin, knew that there they could be free and breathe an atmosphere of penitential peace. Guests pointed out the way to the new disciples of the Saint, and furthered the propagation of his Order.

21. I was unwilling to make a commentary on the *Rule*, because, even if I had been disposed, I could not have done it, on account of the poverty of erudition, and the mental heaviness which I feel on entering into the atmosphere of those supernatural reasons which led the Saint to write and publish it. I cannot, however, close this holy book without presenting in the vernacular the chapter on the election of the Abbot, because in this is the Patriarch of the monks of the West represented as living, nor could the history of his deeds depict him better.

"In the election of the Abbot," he says, "let this rule be ever borne in mind, that such an one shall be appointed as all the Congregation by common consent, according to the fear of God, or even a part, though small, shall with wiser counsel have chosen. . . . The Abbot, when he is appointed, should always bear in mind how great a burden he has undertaken, and to whom he must give an account of his stewardship; and let him know that it behoveth him rather to profit others than to preside over them. It behoveth him, therefore, to be learned in the Divine Law, that he may know whence to 'bring forth new things and old; he must be chaste, sober, and merciful, and let him always exalt mercy over justice, that he himself may obtain the same. Let him hate all vices, let him love the brethren. Even in

administering corrections, let him act with prudence, and in no wise exceed, lest, whilst he is too anxious to rub off the rust, the vessel itself be broken; and let him ever keep in mind his own frailty, and remember that a bruised reed should not be broken.' In saying this, we do not mean that he should suffer vices to be nourished, but that he should cut them off prudently and with charity, as we have said before, and seek to root them out in such a way as shall be expedient in each case; and let him study rather to be loved than to be feared. He must observe calmness in his way, and be not full of care; neither let him be over-exacting, nor headstrong, nor jealous, nor over-suspicious, for then he will never be at rest. And in his commands let him be provident and considerate, whether they pertain to God or to temporal matters. In the works which he enjoins let him be discreet and moderate, considering the discretion of holy Jacob, who saith: 'If I shall cause my flocks to be over-driven, they will all die in one day.'[1] Therefore, adopting these and the like principles of discretion, which is the mother of all virtues, so let him regulate all things, that there may be what the strong may desire, and what the weak need not be afraid of. And especially, let him see that he keep this present Rule in all respects, so that having ministered well, he may hear from the Lord what the good servant heard, who gave corn to his fellow-servants in due season: 'Amen, I say unto you, he will place him over all his goods.'"[2]

[1] Gen. xxxiii. 13.

[2] Matt. xxiv. 47: *De ordinando Abbate*, cap. lxiv.: "In Abbatis ordinatione illa semper consideretur ratio: ut hic constituatur, quem sibi omnis concors Congregatio secundum timorem Dei, sive etiam pars, quamvis parva, Congregationis, saniori consilio elegerit. Vitæ autem merito et sapientiæ doctrina eligatur, qui ordinandus est; etiamsi ultimus fuerit in ordine Congregationis. Quod si etiam omnis Congregatio vitiis suis (quod quidem absit), consentientem personam pari consilio elegerit, et vitia ipsa aliquatenus in notitia Episcopi (ad cujus Diœcesim pertinet locus ipse), vel Abbatibus aut Christianis vicinis claruerint, prohibeant pravorum prævalere consensum; sed Domui Dei dignum constituant dispensatorem: scientes pro hoc se recepturos mercedem bonam, si illud caste et zelo Dei faciant; sicut e diverso, peccatum, si negligant.

"Ordinatus autem Abbas cogitet semper quale onus suscepit, et cui redditurus est rationem villicationis suæ: sciatque sibi oportere prodesse magis, quam

22. St Benedict wrote his Rule with his own hand at Monte Cassino, and we find that two autograph copies of it existed. One was given by the Saint to his disciple Maurus, in order that he might propagate it in France, together with the bread-weight and the measure of the hemina of wine, as Faustus tells us, who says distinctly that the book of the Rule was written by the Saint's own hand.[1] When the monastery of Glanfeuil was destroyed, it appears that this copy was lost; but it would be well to read what Mabillon wrote about it.[2] The other autograph was taken to Rome by the Cassinese in the year 586, and brought back again to Monte Cassino when their monastery was restored under Abbot Pertinax.[3] By a special grant of Pope Zachary, among other gifts offered to St Benedict was that of the book of the Rule, *quam piissimus Pater manu propria scripserat.* From which it is clear that this holy relic, as well as the bread-weight, were, with the consent of the monks, in the possession of Popes Gregory II and Zachary. From this autograph Abbot Theodomar in the eighth century had a copy made of the Holy Rule, which he sent to Charlemagne, as we read in an epistle of this Abbot, written by Paul the

præesse. Oportet ergo eum esse doctum lege divina; ut sciat unde proferat nova et vetera; et castum, sobrium, misericordem, et semper superexaltet misericordiam judicio, ut idem ipse consequatur. Oderit vitia, diligat Fratres. In ipsa autem correptione prudenter agat, et ne quid nimis: ne dum nimis eradere cupit aeruginem, frangatur vas; suamque fragilitatem semper suspectus sit, memineritque, calamum quassatum non conterendum. In quibus non dicimus ut permittat nutriri vitia: sed prudenter et cum charitate ea amputet, ut viderit cuique expedire, sicut jam diximus: et studeat plus amari, quam timeri. Non sit turbulentus et anxius: non sit nimius et obstinatus: non sit zelotypus et nimis suspiciosus; quia nunquam requiescet. In ipsis imperiis suis sit providus et consideratus, sive secundum Deum, sive secundum seculum. Opera, quæ injungit, discernat et temperet, cogitans discretionem sancti Jacob, dicentis:—*Si greges meos plus in ambulando fecero laborare, morientur cuncti una die.*—Haec ergo aliaque testimonia discretionis matris virtutum sumens, sic omnia temperet, ut sit quod et fortes cupiant, et infirmi non refugiant. Et præcipue, ut præsentem Regulam in omnibus conservet: ut, dum bene ministraverit, audiat a Domino quod servus bonus qui erogavit triticum conservis suis in tempore suo:—*Amen dico vobis, ait: super omnia bona sua constituet eum.*"

[1] ". . . librum Regulæ, quem ipse Sanctus manu sua scripserat."—*Vita St Mauri.* [2] Ann., 543, tom. i. p. 119. [3] Chron. Casin., cap. ii.

Deacon, and published by Della Noce in Notes on the Cronaca di Leone.[1] When the monastery of Monte Cassino was devastated by the Saracens under Bertarius, in the year 884, and the monks fled to Teano and took refuge in a monastery already dedicated to St Benedict, they took with them that precious autograph; but seven years afterwards this monastery, having caught fire, *occulto Dei judicio*, was burnt down, and, together with many other precious documents, the aforesaid manuscript was consumed.[2] There was an ancient tradition among the Cassinese that a page of the manuscript was saved from the flames, and afterwards preserved with great veneration among other sacred relics in their church. Simon Millet, a French Benedictine monk, in his Commentaries on the Second Book of the "*Dialogues*" of St Gregory, narrates that in 1605 he saw it enclosed in a capsule of gold and crystal, which bore these words engraved upon it: *Hæc est scriptura propriæ manus St Benedicti Abbatis.*[3] Mabillon also at the end of the same century saw it, but he thinks that the date of the writing does not go back as far as St Benedict. He conjectures that perhaps that page was taken from the autograph, carried into France by St Maurus, and afterwards given to the Cassinese by the Clunaic monks when they came to their monastery to offer the remarkable relic of the arm of this Saint.[4] But, at the beginning of this century, the transalpine *Sanculotti* took away from the erudite the occasion of further discussion regarding this treasure, by destroying it with other relics.

And here the opportunity offers itself for clearing up the question whether St Benedict wrote his Rule at Subiaco or Monte Cassino; but the aim of this book does not allow me to repeat here what has been said at great length on this point by the Benedictines Constantine Gaetani, Ugo Menardo, Clement Reyner, and Mabillon, to whom the reader can go

[1] P. 128, *n.* 582: ". . . en vobis Regulam ejusdem Beati Patris de ipso *Codice*, quem ille suis sanctis manibus *exaravit*, transcriptam direximus."

[2] Chron. Casin., cap. xlviii.

[3] Haeftenus, *Disquisit. monastic.*, tom. i. p. 108.

[4] Ann. O. S. B., tom. i. p. 119.

for information on this subject. I will only make a brief observation here, without defining or combating the opinions of others. It is certain that the twelve monasteries founded by St Benedict in the neighbourhood of Subiaco were governed by him with definite laws, for, as St Gregory says, *sanctissimis legibus communivit*, which were the same that we read in the Rule. Hence, before the foundation of the Cassinese monastery, St Benedict ruled the Subiaco monks by the same kind of laws as those by which he afterwards governed the Cassinese. But were these statutes written and reduced into a body of laws or into a Rule at Subiaco or at Monte Cassino? The answer is short, but confirmed by fact. The Rule was written at Monte Cassino, because only in this monastery that written by the hand of the Saint was given to St Placid and St Maurus, the first propagators of the Order, and only in this monastery was it preserved, until it was consumed by fire in the monastery of Teano, where the Cassinese took refuge, as has been said, during the incursion of the Saracens, and, again, because St Gregory and the Subiaco monuments have transmitted no record of a written Rule.

CHAPTER VI.

1. Tertullus visits St Benedict—2. His donations and his sepulchre at Monte Cassino—3. Donations of Equitius and Gordianus—4. St Placid is sent into Sicily—5. He founds a monastery at Messina and suffers martyrdom: his cult—6. The miracles and prophecies of St Benedict—7. The two disobedient monks who eat outside the monastery—8. The brother of the monk Valentinian—9. The disobedient monk who received the present of handkerchiefs—10. How St Benedict made known the proud thoughts of a monk—11. Of King Totila and the Goth Zalla—12. The stratagem of Totila to prove St Benedict's spirit of prophecy—13. How he afterwards went on foot and heard the prophecy of his future—14. Another of the Saint's prophecies on the desolation of Rome—15. Why so many of St Benedict's miracles and prophecies in the time of the barbarians?

1. WHILST St Benedict saw the monastery of Monte Cassino flourishing under his care and the guidance of his Rule, it is certain that he did not forget the solitude of Subiaco, in which he passed the holiest days of his life, and, in thinking over the events that happened there, that of the oblation of the young Maurus and Placid brought him the sweetest consolation. On the day when, for the first time, he embraced them as his sons, he must have perceived beforehand the fragrance of that fruitful field which his Order was to become later on in the vineyard of the Lord.

It cannot be said that the two Roman nobles—Tertullus and Equitius—the fathers of those two "oblati," quite lost sight of them because they were consecrated to God in the monastic profession. They knew of St Benedict's deeds, of the destruction of the idols, of the building of the monastery, of the conversion of the Cassinese territory to Christ, of the angelical life of the monks, and they could not help seeing with their own eyes—especially Tertullus—the fruit of that oblation of Monte Cassino which had been made to the Saint at Subiaco. The delight of the Master in receiving him as a guest being well known by the son, he had come from Rome with some friends, among whom were Equitius,

the father of St Maurus, Vitalianus, and Gordianus, the father of St Gregory the Great; but Boetius and Symmachus were not among them, (as the interpolator of the Acts of St Placid falsely states,) for they were already dead before St Benedict came to Monte Cassino. Having arrived at Monte Cassino, he ascended the mountain. The Saint and his two disciples, Placid and Maurus, were at the door of the monastery; on seeing them Tertullus cast himself down before St Benedict to kiss his feet; the Saint, pressing him to his bosom, gave him in return the kiss of peace; then, leading him to the Oratory of St Martin, with tears of joy presented him to the assembled brethren. Tertullus, after all had given him the kiss of peace, petitioned and obtained the favour of spiritual brotherhood. Then the rich Patrician confirmed the oblation of all Monte Cassino and its dependencies,[1] and signed the donation in writing. This was the famous diploma of Tertullus, the original copy of which no longer exists; perhaps it was lost in the destruction of the monastery by Duke Zoto of Beneventum.

2. There is no doubt that Tertullus made extensive donations of land to St Benedict, for such donations always accompanied in those times the oblation of youths to the monastic life, and the historical tradition is confirmed by the diplomas of Popes and Princes who came afterwards; and, indeed, if this were denied, we should not be able to discover the first origin of the rich patrimony of the Abbey of Monte Cassino. The truth of a fact known through an historical tradition never interrupted, and confirmed by subsequent diplomatic documents, is one thing, and the authenticity of

[1] I give in the note two inscriptions, which show that the family of the Tertulli were in Interamna and possessed lands in the territory of Cassino, the city of Cassino being three miles distant from them. The inscriptions were discovered in the July of 1834.

I.

L . MARCIO L . F .
TER. REGI . IIIIVIR . I . D .
VIBIA . M . F . TERTVLLA .
VXOR .

II.

L . AEFRIO . L . F . TER.
NIGRO . VIBIA
M . F . TERTVLLA . FILIO .

synchronous writing in which that fact is recorded is another. The difference is the same as exists between the historical and the juridical value of an event.

We have only one copy of Tertullus' diploma, perhaps of the twelfth century. All the greatest writers of ancient history, whose names it would be too long to enumerate, bear witness to this donation. I do not, however, wish to pass over in silence what the most learned Troja, a layman, not a monk, thought of this donation; the reader will find his words in the Appendix to this book.[1]

Besides these possessions he left his whole heart to St Benedict on his departure from Monte Cassino, and, looking upon himself as a brother of his monks, who had received him as a participator in their spiritual goods, wished that, after his death, his body should be brought and buried before their refectory, so that morning and evening, when they entered there, they might remember him, and pray to God for the repose of his soul. And even to the present day the pious custom has never been broken of keeping an annual commemoration on the 16th of July, and offering prayers for the soul of this benefactor. There is mention of him in the ancient Cassinese necrology.[2]

3. Equitius also, who made an oblation of his son Maurus, gave lands and churches to St Benedict, and, stimulated by his example, Gordianus, the father of St Gregory the Great, gave, in the name of his wife Silvia, together with many other lands, the villa Euchelia in the suburb of Aquinum.[3] It is certain that down to the year 1806 the Abbey of Monte Cassino possessed many lands in the territory of Aquinum, one of which is yet called Torre di S. Gregorio, from a remnant of the ancient tower recently converted into a cottage, a witness to the traditional donation of Gordianus. The possession of the monastery in which, according to St

[1] See Appendix C.

[2] Cod. n. 47. "Decimo septimo Kal. Augusti: Tertulli Romanorum Patricii Benefactoris nostri."

[3] *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, tom. i. p. 52; *Vita St Placidi.*

Gregory, St Benedict and his sister Scholastica met every year, not far from Aquinum, was, perhaps, one of those bestowed by Gordianus.

4. Among the possessions offered to St Benedict by Tertullus were eighteen residences in Sicily. We need not wonder at this Patrician's insular possessions. Claudian, a writer of that period, tells us how the Italians, terrified at the approach of Alaric, from the year 402, placed their most valuable treasures in safety in the islands of Sicily, Corsica, and Sardinia. Hence it is not improbable that they also acquired lands in those places.[1] But these rich offerings began, even in the time of St Benedict, to disturb the peace of minds on account of the obligation of preserving them as things of God; and the sweet bread, which had been acquired by the sole labour of poverty, began to taste bitter through the anxiety of guarding its possession. Not long after the arrival of Tertullus at Monte Cassino, the eighteen residences in Sicily fell a prey to a race that had no liking for saints and monks. When St Benedict came to know this, not wishing that the possessions consecrated to God should be lost, and considering that such a sacrifice might prove a help in the propagation of his Order, he resolved to send there his beloved disciple Placid. Following out what he has laid down in his Rule, he submitted this grave matter to the consideration of the whole Congregation, and, taking their advice, he did not hesitate to part with that dear son, whom, when seven years old, he had guided at Subiaco in the path of perfection and made into a saint.

Accompanied on his journey by the monks Gordianus, whom the author of his Life calls a Roman and learned in Greek literature, and Donatus, he took leave of his Master, St Benedict. As if predicting the death which his disciple would suffer in that island for the Faith of Christ, St Benedict comforted him with words which pointed to his martyrdom. At daybreak on the 20th of May, in the year 537, he departed from his monastery, and in the evening

[1] *De Bello Gotico*, *Murat.*, *Ann.* 402.

arrived at Capua, where he was the guest of Bishop Germanus, of whom I shall speak by-and-by; then, passing through the Caudine Forks, he came to Beneventum, where Bishop Martian, through the love he bore towards St Benedict, received him with great reverence. Having arrived at Canosa, Bishop Savinus, who had been united in a long friendship with St Benedict, went forth with great joy to see him, and kept him as his guest for three days, showering upon him every species of kindness. He was constantly engaged in spiritual colloquies with him, and made many enquiries about the life of his friend, his sweet teaching, and the miracles which God had wrought through him. At Rhegium, in Calabria, he was the guest of the Bishop, Sinnius. I have wished to draw the attention of the reader to these kind receptions in order that he may see how widely-spread St Benedict's fame was, and with what reverence he was regarded, even by the Prelates of the Church.

5. When St Placid arrived at Messina, he gave himself to the work for which his Master had sent him; he founded a monastery there, and, during a sudden irruption of the Barbarians into the island, he suffered martyrdom for the Faith of Christ, together with his two brothers Eutychius and Victorinus, and his sister Flavia, who had come from Rome to visit him, and also with many of his monks. I do not touch on the particulars of this martyrdom, which are read in the *Acts* of the Saint's life, because they will not bear the scrutiny of sound criticism. But, according to Mabillon, the fact is mentioned in the ancient Martyrology of Usuard,[1] and the tradition is confirmed by the cult which the Church has permitted. In a Calendar of the eleventh century, belonging to the Cassinese Library, there is recorded in letters of gold, "the birthday of St Placid, the most blessed martyr, on the 5th of October, in Sicily, with his companions Eutychius, Victorinus, and thirty others; through love of whom his father,

[1] "Tertio Nonas Octobris. Apud Siciliam natalis SS. Martyrum Placidi, Eutychii et aliorum triginta."

the Patrician Tertullus, gave to the most blessed Father Benedict eighteen residences of his patrimony." In the most ancient Vatican Litanies, and in those of Monte Cassino, written under Abbot Oderisius I., the name of St Placid and his martyr companions is invoked after those of St Benedict and St Maurus. According to Mabillon, those who put St Placid to death and destroyed his monastery were not the Saracens, for that would have been an anachronism, but the Slaves; for this statement he depends upon the history of Procopius.[1] It is certain that, after the monastery had been rebuilt by other Cassinese monks, and its inmates had been driven away by the successive irruptions of the Normans and Saracens, the Church was given by Roger I., Count of Sicily, at the beginning of the twelfth century, to the Knights of Jerusalem.[2] In the year 1588 the bodies of those holy martyrs were discovered, and the ancient *cultus*, with which they had been always honoured, was confirmed by the Church.[3]

Amongst Benedictine memories, that of the martyr St Placid has always been one of the dearest, because he was so beloved by St Benedict. I find in the *Acts* of that Saint's life, that, when he who had prepared him by monastic discipline for the martyr's strife heard of his glorious death, he broke forth into spiritual joy, and I believe it. St Benedict had not, indeed, forgotten that night when, as he prayed on the mountain of Subiaco for a stream of water for his monks, he had at his side the young child Placid, in order to teach him the practice of prayer by his own example. It may be that at that moment he pointed out the starry heavens to him and said—"Keep thy heart lifted up, for that is the way that leads to God." When he heard of his death for the Faith, he was filled with joy, for his child had not missed the way; indeed, he was his own precursor to Heaven, and that of the countless Benedictine Saints who followed him.

[1] *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, in Præfatione, tom. i.
[2] *Sicilia Sacra*, lib. iv. p. 145.
[3] See Mabillon, *Annal. O. S. B.*, tom. i. p. 83.

6. Among those virtues, which, as St Paul observes, the Apostles had, through supernatural grace, was the gift of miracles and of prophecy, the gift of tongues and the discernment of spirits; gratuitous gifts, without the prevision of merits, and which God dispenses *prout vult*. It may be said that these gifts are objective rather than subjective. They are ordinated to some end which God proposes to Himself, and not to the sanctification of the subject on whom they are conferred. Charity is the fruit of grace only, which sanctifies whoever possesses it. So that God can transcend the pre-established laws of nature, by prophecy and miracles, without the necessity of adopting instruments already sanctified by charity. Balaam foretold the coming of Christ; and St Paul affirms that even if he had Faith enough to remove mountains, he would, without charity, be as nothing before God. And I find in history that God bestows these gifts as He pleases, and especially in the beginning of the great historical periods of the Church. During the foundation of the Church, the Apostles were the wonder-workers and prophets; St Benedict was a thaumaturgus and prophet whilst the Church was being planted in the heart of civil society; a thaumaturgus and prophet was the Poor Man of Assisi, who redeemed the proletariat from the slavery of the rich, just at the time when the union of Faith and Reason was about to come forth from the darkness of the Middle Ages; a thaumaturgus and prophet is Vincent of Paul, the liberator of woman from the slavery of sense, who reconciles Reason and Faith by miracles of charity, and, in the mysterious ages of electricity and steam, points out a path of light for the safe guidance of human progress. This historical observation will give relief to the legendary narrative which I cite from St Gregory.

7. It was the custom of the monastery, that whenever the Brethren went forth on any business, they should not take anything to eat outside. This custom, then, being strictly observed, it happened that, on a certain day, some of the Brethren went out on business, and were compelled to remain

till a later hour than usual. They went, therefore, to the house of a certain pious woman whom they knew, and took some food. Now, when they returned to the monastery, they asked the Father's blessing as usual. He at once inquired of them: "Where have you taken food?" They answered, "nowhere." He said to them: "Why do you lie? Did you not enter into the house of such a woman? Did you not take this and that to eat? Did you not drink so many cups? When the venerable Father told them of the woman's hospitality, and of the kinds of food they had eaten, and the number of cups they had drunk, they, acknowledging all they had done, cast themselves trembling at his feet and confessed their fault. He immediately pardoned their offence, admonishing them not to do such things again in his absence, for he was always with them in spirit."[1]

8. The same thing happened to the brother of Valentinian, one of St Benedict's monks, who, after the Saint's death, was for many years Abbot of the Cassinese at the Lateran.[2] This person was accustomed to come every year to Monte Cassino in order to recommend himself to the prayers of the Saint, and see his brother. During the whole journey he used to abstain from every kind of food, not as if bound by the Rule, but by his own choice. On one occasion, however, he was spent with the journey, and was tempted by the evil spirit to break his abstinence. When he arrived at the

[1] *Dialog.*, lib. ii., cap. xii. : "Mos etenim cellæ fuit, ut quoties ad responsum aliquod egrederentur Fratres, cibum potumque extra cellam minime sumerent. Cumque hoc de usu Regulæ solicite servaretur, quadam die ad responsum Fratres egressi sunt, in quo tardiori compulsi sunt hora demorari. Qui manere juxta religiosam foeminam noverant, cujus ingressi habitaculum sumserunt cibum. Cumque jam tardius ad cellam rediissent, benedictionem Patris ex more petierunt. Quos ille protinus percontatus est, dicens: Ubi comedistis? Qui responderunt, dicentes: Nusquam. Quibus ille ait: Quare ita mentimini? Numquid illius talis foeminae habitaculum non intrastis. Numquid hos atque illos cibos non accepistis? Numquid tot calices non bibistis? Cumque eis venerabilis Pater, et hospitium mulieris, et genera ciborum, et numerum potionum diceret, recognoscentes cuncta, quae egerant, ad ejus pedes tremefacti ceciderunt, et se deliquisse confessi sunt. Ipse autem protinus culpæ pepercit, perpendens quoque, quod in ejus absentia ultra non facerent, quem præsentem sibi esse in spiritu scirent."

[2] *Dialog.*, lib. ii. cap. xiii.

monastery, he found that the Saint knew what he had done, because he was present with him in spirit when he yielded to the tempter.

9. "Not far from the monastery there was a village," St Gregory tells us, "in which there lived a number of people who had been converted from the worship of idols to the Faith of Christ by the preaching of St Benedict, and there was also there a convent of nuns. St Benedict frequently sent his monks there to preach to them. One day he sent a monk there, who, after his sermon, accepted, at the request of the nuns, some handkerchiefs which he hid in his bosom. When he returned to the monastery, the man of God at once began to most vehemently upbraid him, saying, 'How is it that wickedness has entered into thy bosom?' But he was amazed, and, forgetting what he had done, did not know why he was blamed. Then the Saint said to him: 'Was I not present when thou didst receive the handkerchiefs from the Lord's servants, and hide them in thy bosom?' He, at once throwing himself at his feet, confessed that he had acted foolishly, and cast away the handkerchiefs which he had hidden in his bosom."[1]

10. St Gregory mentions an example of his gift of discernment of spirits, as St Paul calls it, or the knowledge of the secrets of hearts. "On a certain day, when the venerable Father was taking his evening meal, one of his monks, the son of an advocate, was holding the lamp at table. Whilst the man of God ate, he that held the light began, in the spirit

[1] Cap. xix.: "Non longe autem a Monasterio vicus erat, in quo magna multitudo hominum ad fidem Dei ab idolorum cultu Benedicti fuerat exhortatione conversa. Ibi quoque quædam sanctimoniales foeminæ inerant, et crebro illuc pro exhortandis animabus, Fratres suos mittere Benedictus Dei famulus curabat. Quodam vero die misit ex more: Sed is, qui missus fuerat Monachus, post admonitionem factam, a sanctimonialibus foeminis rogatus, mappulas accepit, sibique eas in sinu abscondit; qui mox ut reversus est, eum vir Dei vehementissima amaritudine coepit increpare, dicens: Quomodo ingressa est iniquitas in sinum tuum? At ille obstupuit, et quid egisset oblitus, unde corripiebatur, ignorabat. Cui ait, num quid ego illic praesens non eram quando ab ancillis Dei mappulas accepisti, tibique eas in sinu misisti? Qui mox ejus vestigiis provolutus, stulte se egisse poenituit et eas, quas in sinu absconderat, mappulas projecit."

of pride, to ponder secretly in his mind, and to say in his heart: 'Who is this whom I am serving at table, and to whom, by holding this light, am I acting the servant?' The man of God, turning to him, began to sharply reprimand him, saying: 'Sign thy heart with the cross, Brother; what is it thou sayest? Sign thy heart with the cross.' And calling the Brethren together without delay, he commanded the lamp to be taken from him; that he should be deprived of his office, and not appointed to any other. When the Brethren asked him what he had in his heart, he told them the whole story; how he cherished a feeling of pride in his heart, and had in secret spoken words against the man of God. Then it became evident to them that nothing could be hidden from the venerable Benedict, for he could hear even the whisper of their secret thoughts."[1]

11. But the prophetical power of the Saint was not confined simply to the monastery; it was shown more remarkably outside, with regard to the most terrible personage of those times—Totila, King of the Goths. This king was surnamed Baduilla, and succeeded Eraricus. Procopius, in his History of the Gothic nation, extols him to the skies as a liberal and very virtuous man. St Gregory puts him down as perfidious, and St Benedict regards him as a malefactor. It is certain, however, that in military qualities he surpassed his predecessors; but, like all his nation, being Christian in Faith, he was tainted with Arianism through their ancient Bishop

[1] Cap. 20: "Quadam quoque die, dum venerabilis Pater vespertina jam hora, corporis alimenta perciperet, ejus Monachus cujusdam defensoris filius fuerat, qui ei ante mensam lucernam tenebat. Cumque vir Dei ederet, ipse autem cum lucernae ministerio adstaret, coepit per superbiae spiritum in mente sua tacitus volvere, et per cogitationem dicere: Quis est hic, cui ego manducanti assisto, lucernam teneo, servitium impendo? Quis sum ego, ut isti serviam? Ad quem vir Dei statim conversus, vehementer eum coepit increpare, dicens: Signa cor tuum, Frater, quid est quod loqueris? Signa cor tuum: vocatisque statim Fratribus, præcipit ei lucernam de manibus, tolli, ipsum vero jussit a ministerio recedere, et sibi hora eadem quietum sedere. Qui requisitus a Fratribus, quid habuerit in corde, per ordinem narravit, quanto superbiae spiritu intumuerat, et quæ contra virum Dei verba per cogitationem tacitus dicebat. Tunc liquido omnibus patuit, quod venerabilem Benedictum latere nil posset, in cujus aure etiam cogitationis verba sonuissent."

Ulfilas. On this account he and the people that he led held in hatred the priests and monks of the Catholic Faith, nor did they believe in the prophecies and miracles of the Servants of God. They found one of these holy men in Campania, and tried to burn him alive, together with his cell, as a dangerous wild beast. When he was saved from the fire by a miracle, wishing to thwart the power of God, they hunted the poor monk into an oven which they saw open, and heated for baking bread ; but he came out of it alive, as St Gregory relates.[1] I mention this in order to show that Totila was desirous to know if the Saints of the Roman Church could really work miracles and prophesy.

Having descended into Southern Italy, and defeated the generals who were sent against him by the Emperor Justinian, Totila directed his forces through Sannium in order to lay siege to Beneventum. Arriving at Cassino, he there found the inhabitants full of admiration and reverence for the holy founder of the Abbey which they saw rising on the summit of the mountain. And so much did he hear of the prodigies which God wrought through him, and of the power which he had to read into human hearts and to prophesy, that he did not wish to go away without seeing him, and putting the truth of his reputation to the proof.

Perhaps he was urged on in this desire by a certain Zalla, one of his own soldiers, who, being a fanatical Arian, became so infuriated at the very sight of a cleric or a Catholic monk, that if one of them fell into his hands, he would hardly escape with his life. One day, as he went about plundering in the country places, he met a rustic, and began at once to demand what he had about him. He wanted gold ; but the poor man had none, so he subjected him to sharp torture. Not being able to bear the pains, and, in order to gain time and life, if possible, he told the Goth that he had given up all he had into the hands of Benedict. Zalla believed him. Having freed him from torment, and bound him with cords, he put him on his horse, and drove

[1] *Dialog.*, lib. iii. cap. xviii.

him up the mountain to the monastery, in order to get from the Saint the treasure entrusted to him. Having arrived at the gate, they saw the Saint alone, occupied in his usual reading; the countryman, turning to the fierce cavalier, said—"See, that is the Father Benedict, of whom I spoke to you." The Goth, thinking he could subdue him by terror, began, with brutish roughness, to shout out—"Get up, get up, and give me what this countryman has entrusted to you." At this noise the Saint lifted up his eyes from his book and turned them on him; then he cast them on the countryman, who stood there trembling, and expecting death for his lying. But when those eyes fell upon the bonds which held him, in a moment they snapped as if they had been cut by a sharp knife. Then the Saint, without leaving his reading, called his monks, and ordered them to conduct Zalla to the refectory, where, as a guest, he should have the blessing (*benedizione*). This was the name given to the food which was sent or prepared for charity or alms, and which, according to the custom of the Christians, had been previously blessed.[1] I do not believe that, whilst Zalla was received within, the poor martyred countryman was left at the gate. A little of the *blessing* must have reached him; and it must have happened that the conquered Roman and the conquering Goth sat as good friends at the same table. Thus it was that St Benedict overcame the Barbarians, and the violence of their irruptions was broken at the gates of his Abbey. Hence Zalla knelt at the feet of the man of God, and, *fractus*, as St Gregory says, received his admonitions; it ought to be added that being subdued by charity, he no longer continued, with brutal force, to violate justice.

12. The evil-doer and the innocent did not cease to speak of what had happened, and to extol, to the skies, the virtue of the Saint. This excited in Totila a great desire to see, with his own eyes, this worker of prodigies. He sent a message to the Saint, saying that he would come to visit him. He then

[1] Haeften, p. 154.

revealed to a certain Riggo, his spatharius (a high official, who carried a sword in presence of the king, and had to defend his person, according to Eastern custom), that he intended to try whether the fame of St Benedict's prophetical power was true; and he resolved to make it clear by a stratagem. He gave Riggo his own shoes and purple mantle, and all the armour, which, as Giordone[1] narrates, the Gothic kings began to wear by order of Theodoric. Whoever wishes to know what those garments and arms were, will find it in Sidonius, quoted by Haeften.[2] Thus disguised as a king, Totila ordered him to ascend the mountain and present himself to the Saint, to see if he would discover the imposture. In order to accompany him as his courtiers, Counts Vulteric, Ruderig, and Blindinus were chosen, who attended upon the king each day as a guard of honour, and also a crowd of other chief men, servants, and soldiers, so that no one, on seeing such a grand troop, would doubt that Totila was ascending the mountain to visit the Saint in person.

Benedict was not ignorant of the coming of this company; precursors were not wanting to bring him the news, magnifying all this parade of a warlike king like Totila, who was coming from recent victories gained over the Imperialists in Northern Italy. And perhaps there were some persons, who, having suffered more than others, from the rapine and depredations of the Goths, begged the Saint to inspire him with a little compassion, that he might restrain the licence of his army. But the man of God, who, already by Divine revelation, knew both men and things, without showing himself the least perturbed, or calling his monks from their usual occupations, stood waiting on the *podio*, which united his cell in the tower with the common dormitory, and engaged in reading, with a book in his hand. And behold, among the trees was a flashing of arms, the tramping of horses, the sound of a strange language; and, after standing a little on reaching the extreme southern ridge of the mountain, the apocryphal Totila with his retinue approached the tower of the monas-

[1] Haeftenus, "Disquisit. Monast.," p. 115. [2] Lib. iv. epist. 20.

tery. But he had scarcely reached the threshold, when the Saint, with true prophetic instinct, called out from the *podio*, "Put off, my son, put off those garments; they are not thine."[1] Riggo, thunderstruck at the word which came from God, fell flat on his face to the ground, together with all his attendants. On rising up, he dared not move a step onwards to approach the Saint, whom he thought to entangle in a snare, but, turning round, he and his retinue went back to the king, and told him how they had been discovered and seen through by a true prophet.

13. Totila, who had thought to make sport of the Saint, conceived a great veneration for him when he heard Riggo's story, and, before moving onwards with his army, wished to go up the mountain, in the year 542, and pay his respects to him. When he was near the tower, at the sight of the man of God sitting on the *podio*, he dared not approach; but, dismounting from his horse, he prostrated himself, as if in adoration. Having in vain thrice called out to him to rise, the holy man went down to meet him, and led him into the monastery. According to the description of this event, written in the eighth century, of which we have already spoken, it would seem that St Benedict and Totila met on the *podio* itself.[2] Having the king before him in this humble mind, Benedict raised his voice into that majesty of speech which comes from God, and opened out his future before him. "Thou hast wrought, and art now working many iniquities; put, for once, a restraint on so much wickedness. Thou wilt enter into Rome, thou wilt cross the sea; other nine years shalt thou reign; in the tenth thou shalt die." At these words the barbarian's soul was moved to its depths; and having asked the Saint to recommend him to God, he took his departure."[3]

[1] Cap. xiv.: "Pone, fili, pone; nam hoc quod portas, non est tuum."

[2] "Ibi corruit Totila."

[3] "Multa mala facis, multa mala fecisti: jam aliquando ab iniquitate compescere. Equidem Romam ingressurus es, mare transiturus: novem annis regnabis; decimo morieris. Quibus auditis rex vehementer territus oratione petita, recessit."—*Dialog.*, lib. ii. cap. xv.

From that day Totila exercised more control over himself in the pursuit of his conquests, and even performed deeds of remarkable kindness. Of this he gave a beautiful example, as Procopius narrates, in the siege of Cuma and Naples.[1] In the former case, he found, among the fugitives, the wives of some Roman senators, and he sent them to their husbands untouched; in the latter, he bestowed incredible charity on twenty famished captives, and let them go free; and one of his soldiers, having done an injury to a young woman, he put him to death and ordered his goods to be given to the injured party. Belisarius, who was not a barbarian, allowed his soldiers, at the recapture of Naples, to behave like wild beasts. Totila, four years later, took Rome and dismantled its walls; in 550 he passed with a fleet into Sicily, and finally, in 552, whilst fighting against Narses, lost his life. Thus was fulfilled to the letter St Benedict's whole prophecy. But let the reader take notice that the nine years' reign, predicted by St Benedict, must not be computed from 541, when Totila assumed the government, but from the year in which the prophecy was made—viz., 542.

14. This virtue of prophecy, which was a gift of God, was, it appears, habitual in the Saint. In the very time of Totila, Sabinus, Bishop of Canosa, a man, on account of his sanctity, very dear to St Benedict, and employed by the Sovereign Pontiffs in difficult embassies, came to Monte Cassino to visit the Saint, according to his custom, and, like others, to learn something of his life, and converse with him on spiritual things. Now it happened that their discourse turned on current events, and the Bishop of Canosa expressed his fear to the Saint, that Totila, in his passage through Italy, would enter Rome, and so completely destroy it that it would never again be inhabited. The holy man answered: "Rome will not be destroyed by the hands of men, but will crumble to ruin under the violence of tempests, lightnings, and earthquakes."[2] St Gregory adds that the prophecy was literally fulfilled, affirming that he "saw, under his own eyes, the walls

[1] "De Bello Gotico," lib. iii.

[2] *Dialog.*, ii. cap. xv.

destroyed, the houses in ruins, the monuments crumbling away through age, and falling to the ground."[1] And more at length in his first sermon on the Gospel of St Matthew.[2]

15. And here the reader will want to learn from me how it is that there were so many prophecies and miracles in those times, and that so little is now said about them. I can give no intrinsic reason of this, because, miracles being supernatural facts, even the most holy men perform them only as instruments in the hands of God, who substitutes His own Will for the pre-established laws of nature. And as on that Will depends, for instance, the raising of a dead person, so also on It and on It alone depends the appointment of the time and the place in which the miracle shall be performed. This is a part of the faith of him who works a miracle. The greatest of miracles was the Incarnation of the Word, and the Christ of history is only one miracle, in which all others are included by Faith in Him. Christ wrought wonders in His life and death by His own power, as the Son of God, and He works them yet, by drawing men to Himself through the supernatural power of grace; the Apostles wrought wonders by His power, and they only looked to the edification of the Church, which is God's kingdom on earth.

What the Gentiles were in the economy of the Apostolic miracles, that the Barbarians were in the economy of holy men like St Benedict, who subdued them by charity and miracles, and made them citizens of the City of God.—I mean of modern Christian civilisation. These northern peoples, whom Providence permitted to rush down upon the countries of the Roman Empire, are represented in history as only ferocious perpetrators of rapine, and men of blood; but, being yet uncorrupted by Roman scepticism, they had a great virtue, without which human associations are never regenerated,—faith. They slew, they devastated, because they came as men waging war. War has its rights, which Cicero called

[1] Dialog., lib. ii. cap. xv.: "Roma a gentibus non exterminabitur; sed tempestatibus, coruscis, turbinibus, ac terraemotu fatigata, marcescet in semetipsa."

[2] Cap. xxi.

vis Martis, and they did those things which the Romans themselves did in order to conquer them. I do not believe that the beak of the Roman Eagle was more gentle than their arm wielding the lance and the club. The Roman people, which was a witness and a part of the great dramas of its history, which saw its liberty destroyed by the hand of Augustus amid the horrors of civil wars, which tolerated by complicity the corruptions of the Cæsars, and which accustomed its heart to the terrible sight of Christians given as food to the wild beasts and the flames, was a worn-out people, a prey to that moral lethargy which follows that intoxication of strong passions which they call *scepticism.* At such a time, the soul loses its power to answer, with the echo of Faith, to the word of supernatural revelation. On the contrary, the Barbarian was young, poor in history, without thought of his future, and only intent on settling, by his sword's blade, the problem of the present; and his mind, unencumbered with demoralising and lethargic memories, was full of energy and capable of taking in the word of Christian Faith. Whilst the Roman was unable to strive with him for the past, and the Barbarian became more irritated by the Byzantine Cæsars, if there had been no Church, and its Saints had not existed, the Northern would have prevailed over the Latin race, and the continuity of human progress would have received a check, whose effects no one could have foreseen. The Barbarians were not conquered by the soldiers of Belisarius and Narses, but by St Benedict and his monks, who, with the Ideal of the Evangelical Counsels, knew how to unite to the Latin stock that conquering race, which, while it could not be subdued by the force of armies, bent its head, like Totila and Zalla, at the feet of St Benedict, through the influence of that supernatural virtue, which expressed itself in miracle and prophecy.

CHAPTER VII.

1. The famine of 539—2. St Benedict's charity, and the miracle of the bushels of flour—3. The small supply of oil increased by a miracle—4. The fruit o. these miracles—5. St Benedict restores a boy to life—6. He foretells the destruction of his monastery—7. The sending of St Maurus into France—8. Words with which he bids him farewell—9. The letter and gifts which he sends to him in Aquinum—10. St Maurus propagates the Order in France.

I. WHILST St Benedict, by the power of God, performed these supernatural wonders, and re-created the mind of the Barbarians, he did not cease to strengthen the individual power of his Order, which, in the following ages, was deputed by the Church to fulfil alone, among the nations of the West, those offices of Christian civilisation which were afterwards assigned separately to the other Religious Orders that arose after the age of St Francis.

Although the Goths had more faith than the Romans, they were not less stained with the crimes that war brings with it. Those sudden irruptions of a hungry people, who trampled down the young shoots of vegetation in the country places, and put to flight the inhabitants, produced scarcity and famine, and their accompaniment—the plague. This terrible scourge came upon Italy in the fourth year of the Gothic war, which, according to Baronius, was in 539, and which devastated even Campania. Procopius has gathered up the reports which were current regarding it. He narrates that through hunger men were driven to eat acorns on the mountains, and the grass of the fields, like the beasts; and that, too weak to gather this wretched food, they fell down dead in the effort. There was no one to look after the burial of the corpses. He tells us also of two women who fed on human flesh, killing, in their sleep, the guests whom they received into their house, until they themselves were put to death. He says that not

less than 50,000 persons died of starvation in the province of Picenum, and many others on the shores of the Ionian Sea. St Dacius, Bishop of Milan, when speaking of this famine, says that in Liguria mothers, at that time, ate their own children.

2. This happened also in Campania; and the famished crowds, having no means of obtaining bread, turned their eyes towards the Abbey, and rushed there to beg it from the Saint. He gave all away to them for the love of God, and one day there were only five loaves left to place before the Brethren. They were thrown into great perturbation and despondency on this account, and perhaps a little of that murmuring, which St Benedict so much abhors, was heard among them. He, seeing them cast down, began to reproach them for their distrust, and then he strengthened their confidence in God: "Why," he said to them, "are your minds troubled at the want of bread? To-day there is only a little; to-morrow you will have more. Next day there were found, at the gate of the monastery, 200 bushels of flour in sacks, lying on the ground; and it was never known whom God had sent to put them there. The Brethren returned thanks to Divine Providence, and learned not to doubt of having abundance, even when in want of what was necessary."[1]

3. At the same time, there came to the Saint a certain Agapitus, a sub-deacon, to ask him, with much earnestness, for a little oil. What oil remained in the monastery cellar was very little, in a glass vessel. But the Saint, who had given everything away to the poor, that he might find it in heaven, ordered the cellarer to give that little to Agapitus. The cellarer heard the command, but did not want to understand it. A short time after, when he was asked by the Saint if he had fulfilled the order given him, he answered that he was kept from obeying through fear that not a drop of oil would remain for the use of the Brethren. Then the man of God, seized with indignation, turned to the other monks, and commanded that the vessel of oil should be at once thrown

[1] Dialog., lib. ii. cap. xxi.

out of the window, lest there should remain, in the monastery, what had been preserved through disobedience. This was done, and although there was a rocky precipice beneath, the frail vessel was found entire, and not even a drop of the oil had run out. Having ordered it to be brought up again, he gave it to the poor sub-deacon. Then assembling the Brethren together in a room, in which there was an empty vessel with a cover on it, he and they began to pray fervently, and under their very eyes, as they prayed, such an abundance of oil filled the vessel, that it lifted off the cover and flowed upon the ground. When the praying ceased, the overflow also ceased; from which the Saint took occasion to reprove the cellarer for his want of faith and his disobedience, and exhorted him to humility and confidence in God.[1] And all learned not to doubt the promise of a Saint who, in an instant, changed a vessel, which was almost completely empty of oil, into one of overflowing fulness. I pass over other miracles in silence.

4. Some strong-minded person may wonder that I should gather up these, to me, precious sweepings of the sacristy. But in these things I find certain little gems of charity and faith, which reveal to me the soul of my Saint, and of all that good Latin people who surrounded him and regarded him as their Father. The State no longer existed; there no longer remained the so-called charity of the public official; there was nothing left but the spiritual family of St Benedict, to give refuge and bread. This spiritual family showed itself to them, living and peaceful, in that company of holy workers, called monks, who had been adopted as sons by that most faithful imitator of our Heavenly Father,—St Benedict. He who had brought them to the truth, and nourished them with the bread of his preaching; who, as a humble cultivator of the fields, taught them the liberty of labour; who devoted himself to feeding the hungry, and healing, in wonderful ways, the sick, had gained over their hearts the rights of a paternity more sweet, more chaste, more fruitful than that of flesh and

[1] *Dialog.*, lib. ii. cap. xxix.

blood. Hence the monastery was the paternal home of all these ; hither, then, if any advice was to be sought, if there was a trouble to confide, a sorrow to soothe, all fled, because it was the abode of a kind Father. And it came to pass that those who went there, took home with them not only the consolation of benefits received, but also the knowledge of a family ordinated according to the principles of the Evangelical Counsels. The testimony of poor men, in those desperate times, was not only sufficient for themselves, but was also an abundant provision for the hungry and the afflicted, for they learned the beautiful lesson, that it was not violence and fraud, but charity and confidence in God, that constituted the foundation of the human family, and a protection against every kind of evil. Thus the pagan family became Christian, for St Benedict entered into it with his ministry, and evangelised it by the example of his virtues ; and thus there sprang up, amongst the Barbarians, the first shoots of that Christian civilisation which had been planted in the enclosure of the family.

5. Here is another miracle, to confirm the one just mentioned. One day a man from the neighbourhood of Cassino had lost his son, who was yet in his tender years, and bewailed him with that keen sorrow which the hearts of parents only can feel. He may have been of comely presence, and the object of the tenderest affections of his home, and his father may have reposed in him the hopes of his family. He did not wish to commit the body of his son to the earth without first placing it in the arms of the holy Abbot, in order to see if, through his prayers, God would restore to him what nature had taken away. Carrying him on his bosom, he climbed the mountain-side, and was soon at the monastery gate. Out of breath and sobbing, he could scarcely utter the words of his petition. Hearing that Benedict was engaged with his monks in the fields, he laid the lifeless body on the ground, and hastened at once to find him. When, from a ridge of the mountain, he saw the Saint returning with his monks, he cried out as loud as he could : " Give me back my

son—my own son!" On this the Saint stopped and asked: "Am I, then, the person who has taken away your son?" He answered: "He is dead; restore him to life." The despairing cry of the father excited great pity in the monks' hearts, and they earnestly begged of the Saint that he would restore the boy to his poor afflicted parent. Although his own heart was full of compassion for him, turning to his monks, he said: "Cease to trouble me, brethren: these are deeds to be done, not by me, but by the holy Apostles. Why do you wish to place on my shoulders a burthen which I cannot bear?" These words gave a new pang to the father's heart; but he persevered in his petition, and protested that he would not depart until his son was restored to him. "But where is thy son?" He answered: "He is there on the ground at the gate of the monastery." All went there, and the holy man, kneeling down, prayed, and put his mouth upon the body as if bringing back into his bosom the spirit of life. Then standing up, he lifted up his hands to heaven, saying: "O Lord, regard not my sins, but the Faith of this man, who implores Thee to give back to this body the soul which Thou hast taken away, and restore his son to him." Scarcely had he said these words when, as the soul returned, a tremulous motion ran through the boy's little members, so that, at the touch of God, he appeared, before the eyes of all present, palpitating with life. And thus the Saint, taking him by the hand, gave him alive and well to his father.[1]

St Gregory says nothing of this boy's mother. She had seen him snatched from her bosom by death, and she saw him given back alive by the power of the man of God. The kiss which she impressed on those members, a short time before cold and lifeless, now in the glow of health and palpitating with life, was an outpouring of maternal love which touched not the earth, but, like the smoke of sacrifice, went straight to heaven: it opened its gates and brought down a stream of blessings on the head of St Benedict and his Order, so that as long as ever the Church lasts there shall be a son of his

[1] *Dialog.*, ii. cap. xxxii.

family. Even yet mothers know how to perform these miracles.

6. It pleased God at this time to subject to a severe proof the virtue of the holy Abbot, who, after having done so much good to others by his prayers, was not able to avert a grave calamity which fell upon his children some years after his death. There was amongst his monks a certain Theoprobus, a man of noble birth, who, under the guidance of St Benedict, embraced the monastic life, and he arrived at such perfection of virtue, that his Master took him into his familiar friendship, and confided to him his greatest secrets. One day, when he entered into his Master's cell, he found Benedict bathed in tears and not silent, as was his wont in prayer, but pouring out loud lamentations. Having stood for some time, expecting that the Saint would recover from those sighs and lamentations, he at length asked him the cause of all that anguish. To this the Saint replied: "Behold, see: this monastery which I have built, and so much besides that I have done for my Brethren, will all fall, by the judgment of God, a prey to the infidels. Scarcely have I been able to obtain that the lives of my monks, who live here, should be spared." What Theoprobus heard from the mouth of St Benedict, adds St Gregory, we have seen with our eyes, for the monastery was not long since destroyed by the Lombards. They entered it during the night, whilst the monks were asleep, and, though they destroyed everything, they were unable to lay hands on any of the Brethren.[1] In fact, during the Pontificate of Pelagius II, fifty years after the prophecy, and four years before St Gregory wrote about it, Zoto, Duke of Beneventum, demolished the Abbey, and the monks fled to Rome, where they took up their abode in the Lateran, as has been already said.

7. But God, who regulates human affairs in such a way that neither evil is allowed to overcome us by its strength, nor good to elevate our spirits so far that we are intoxicated by its excess, arranged that to the revelation of the ruin of

[1] Dialog., lib. ii. cap. xvii.

Monte Cassino there should succeed, in the following year, the knowledge of the propagation of Benedict's Order in France.

Although there were already monks in this country, especially those educated by St Martin, Bishop of Tours, nevertheless so great was the reputation of St Benedict's virtue, and of that of his Cassinese monks, that Innocent, Bishop of Mans, wished to have a colony of them in his diocese in order to propagate the Holy Rule there. He sent, as his messengers to St Benedict, his Archdeacon Odegarius and his Vicar Arderadus, men of illustrious birth and of the highest gifts, in order to obtain from him some of his most experienced monks, for the foundation of a monastery, under the Saint's Rule, in a certain part of his diocese. Benedict, looking upon these messengers as sent by God in order to enlist him as a co-operator for His glory, and considering the matter of grave importance, according as the Rule prescribed, submitted it to the consideration of the whole Congregation. Having, then, taken counsel, and wishing to gratify the pious wish of Bishop Innocent, he chose Maurus, the most dear of his disciples, the flower of his family, to carry out this mission, and he gave him for companions his disciples Constantinianus, Faustus, and Antony. He was now an old man, and perhaps conscious of his approaching death, and, therefore, in greater need of help in the government of his monks; nevertheless, he did not hesitate, for the love of God and the propagation of his Order, to part with him whom he had educated with the greatest love in the highest virtues of the Gospel, in order that he might be his successor in the Abbatial office, as, up to that time, he had discharged the duties of Præpositus or Prior. To be separated from him and so see him no more on earth, was a thorn in that heart, which, amid the hard lessons of penance, had not lost the tenderness by which, whilst God is loved, men may be loved also. The grief which he felt in his own heart was shared by all his sons, who, in their fraternal love, knew not how to reconcile them-

selves to the thought of no longer seeing Maurus among them, who imaged forth in himself all the virtues of the Master. They knew of his sharp penances; they called to mind his walking dry-shod on the Subiaco lake; they had been witnesses of his miracles, when, on his return from gathering in the harvest in the fields, he cured, by the touch of his levitical stole, (for he was a deacon), a boy that was mute and deformed in limb. They venerated and loved him as the first-born of their spiritual family, and, seeing him sent forth for ever was a sorrow which broke forth in tears.

8. St Benedict began to comfort them with these words, which the monk Faustus, who was present, gathered up and has transmitted to us: "If there is reason for you to be sorrowful at this parting, most dearly beloved brothers and sons, much more ought I to feel it than you, seeing that I am to lose for ever so great a consolation. But, because, as the Apostle saith, charity is kind, it compels us to show kindness to those who are in need of it, and to prefer the good of others to our own. For this reason I beseech you, by that paternal love which I have for you, that you would restrain your tears and sadness; for God is able, after I have passed away, to send to this holy Congregation men whose merits and example will give you greater edification than mine. But, before all, care must be taken lest, through the malice of the old enemy, that, which to others is a cause of salvation, may be to some of us, through an excess of sadness, an occasion of loss. We, who have been once united in holy charity by the bond of unity, will never be separated from one another, even by places the most distant; for by that intuition of the interior man, which is renewed according to the image of Him who created us, we shall see one another as long as ever life lasts. You, most dear brothers, whom we send forth to distant parts to do the work of God, act manfully, and let your heart be strengthened in your holy religious purpose, knowing for certain that the more hardships you endure in this life for the salvation of others, the greater will be the rewards which you will receive in heaven. And let

not the dissolution of my poor body in any way grieve you: for, when I have laid aside this burthen of flesh, I shall be more intimately present with you, and, by God's grace, shall ever continue to co-operate with you."[1]

Having said these things, and having kissed the four chosen ones whom he was sending forth into France, he accompanied them, together with the whole Congregation, as far as the gate of the monastery; and then, kissing them again, he gave them a blessing, which he knew would be his last. He consigned to Maurus a copy of the Rule, written with his own hand, the bread-weight, and the measure of the hemina of wine allowed to the Brethren. Then turning to the petitioners of Mans, he sent a message to the Bishop, praying that he would give a kind reception to his sons, and be a Father to them in his stead, and grant them a suitable piece of land for a monastery. After this, Maurus and his companions turned their backs on their paternal home of Monte Cassino; and, as they pondered over the Saint's words, which pointed to his approaching death, they felt assured they would never see him on earth again.

[1] "Si tristandum, dilectissimi Fratres ac filii, pro tali esset negotio, mihi magis quam vobis hinc esset moerendum, qui, quantum ad praesens, magnis videor destitui solatiis; sed quia, dicente Apostolo, *Caritas benigna est*, benignitatem caritatis nostræ omnimodis impendere debemus his quos aliquomodo ea indigere cognoscimus; nec nostra tantum quam aliorum quaerere. Quapropter vos amoris paterni sollicitudine a fletibus et moerore temperare deposcimus; quia potens est Deus meliores nobis post hujus depositionem corporis huic sanctae immittere Congregationi, quorum meritis et exemplis longe praestantius quam nostris aedificabimini. Sed et illud summopere nobis est procurandum, ne, versutia antiqui hostis, unde aliis salus acquiritur, inde nobis tristitiae malo detrimentum in aliquo ingeratur. Nos enim quos unitatis semel in sancta caritate iunxit concordia, nunquam vel longissima divident terrarum spatia: quoniam semper interioris hominis aspectu, qui renovatur secundum imaginem ejus qui creavit illum, nos quo advixerimus tempore, invicem intuebimur. Vos autem, Fratres carissimi, quos ad opus Domini construendum ad illas dirigimus partes, viriliter agite, et confortetur cor vestrum in sancto proposito et religione: proculdubio scientes, quia quanto austeriora causa salutis aliorum in hujus saeculi vita pertuleritis, tanto maiora a Deo recipietis caelestium gaudia praemiorum. Nec vos ullo modo resolutio huius nostri moestificet corpusculi: quoniam praesentior vobis, carnis deposito onere, ero, vestrique per Dei gratiam co-operator existam assiduus."—Acta SS. O. S. B., tom. i. p. 282.

With sorrowful hearts they descended the mountain on the western side by a path, of which some precious vestiges yet remain, directing their steps to Aquinum, which is three miles from the base. St Benedict had sent there, the day before, two of his monks—Probus and Aquinus—in order that in the evening they might give them a hospitable reception in the Villa Euchelia, which, as has already been said, Maurus's father, Equitius, had presented to the Saint.

9. If those travellers went forth sad, the monks who remained behind with their Master could not be joyful. Benedict followed his sons, in spirit, with such tenderness of heart, that he could not help showing it. He put in an ivory case three small pieces of the wood of the True Cross, and, as relics, bits of the red cloth which covered the altars of the Blessed Virgin, St Michael the Archangel, and St Stephen, Protomartyr, and he wrote this letter, which St Maurus wished should afterwards be placed in his sepulchre, through love of the writer: "Accept, most beloved, this last gift of thy master, as a testimony of the long-enduring love which he has had for thee: let it be to thee and thy comrades a safeguard amid every species of evil that may befall you. When thou hast completed sixty years from the time thou didst enter upon the life of monastic perfection, thou shalt enter into the joy of thy Lord, as God deigned to reveal to me yesterday, as soon as thou hadst departed. I tell thee beforehand that thou wilt meet with delays on thy way, and wilt find it difficult to secure a suitable place for carrying out those things which God wishes, and that the enemy of the human race will use all the artifices of his malice against you. Nevertheless, the goodness of God will never be wanting to you; and, even if it happen that your soul's desire be long tried and impeded, yet God will deign to give you the most suitable place of abode, and one different from what we hoped for. Lastly, mayest thou be happy in thy going forth, and still more happy in its term."[1]

[1] "Accipe, dilectissime, extrema Institutoris tui dona, quæ et longum nostrum testentur amorem, tibique et commilitonibus tuis contra omnium perpetim

To convey those presents, the Saint chose two monks—Honoratus, and Felicissimus, who was very young, and, according to Faustus, was of noble origin, and a cousin-german of St Maurus. See, reader, how much kindness of heart there was in the choice of this young monk, who, by ties of blood, was very dear to Maurus, and how much more precious the gifts became through affection for the bearer. These two monks arrived at the villa Euchelia at the break of day, when Maurus and his companions, having finished the night Psalmody, were perhaps preparing for the journey which they were about to undertake. The sight of the two brothers, the letter, and the gifts, filled their hearts with such consolations as the world cannot give its votaries. When the two monks were afterwards taking their departure, to return to Monte Cassino, and take back to the Saint the grateful thanks of his beloved disciple, Maurus drew Felicissimus aside, and, with earnest words, exhorted him to perseverance in the monastic profession till his death.

10. I will not narrate in detail the wonderful cures wrought by Maurus on his journey into France, nor the adversities he

munimen præbeant impedimenta malorum. Post expletam enim totam trinam vicenorum decursionem annorum, ex quo Monasterialem adisti perfectionem, in gaudium Domini tui es introducendus, ut nobis Dominus hesterno die, postquam a nobis digressus es, ostendere est dignatus. Praedico etiam tibi moram vos in eundo esse passuros, ac cum difficultate habilem locum inventuros, pro his quae et Deo ordinante perficientur, et quae inimicus humani generis molimine calliditatis suae in vos concitabit. Nusquam tamen benignitas misericordis Dei vobis deerit, sed potius, differendo licet, ac desiderium animi vestri in longum experiendo, aliorsus quam speravimus aptissimam largiri dignabitur mansionem. Iamque valeas felix in profectione, felicior futurus in perventione."

St Thomas makes mention of this letter of St Benedict to St Maurus in that which he wrote to Henry, the Abbot of Monte Cassino, at the time when, being at Aquinum, on his way to Lyons, he was requested by him, in a letter, to interpret a passage of St Gregory in his Book of Morals regarding the prescience of God. The Angelical's autograph letter was discovered by us, not long ago, in the copy of the Morals of St Gregory the Great, n. 82, p. 320, in the Cassinese Library, and published by the Monte Cassino Press. In this letter the holy Doctor writes: " . . . Nec absque divina dispensatione hoc gestum credo ut me proficiscentem in Galliam vestrae litteræ comprehenderent Aquini ubi sanctissimi patris nostri Benedicti, beatus Maurus ejus discipulus ab eo transmissus in Galliam, recipere meruit litteras et sacra exenia tanti patris."

met with when he arrived there, nor the other facts of his life, for all this would take me too far away from the life of St Benedict. The reader can learn the particulars of his mission in that country from Ruinart, in his critical dissertation on this subject.[1] I will only say that, not having been able to found a monastery in Mans, he established the first monastery under the Rule of his Master in Anjou, at a place called Glanfeuil, which was given by King Theodobert, and from which the famous Abbey of Glanfeuil, the mother of all the other monasteries afterwards founded in France, took its name. He ruled this Abbey till the year 581, when, having arrived at old age, he retired to a remote place to prepare himself for death by the exercises of more severe penance. When he came to the end of his days, he had himself carried into the Abbey church, which, in imitation of his Master, he had dedicated to St Martin of Tours, and there, having received the Holy Viaticum, and lying on sackcloth, he gave up his soul to God. His name is found in the most ancient French and Roman Martyrologies, and is invoked, in the Litanies, immediately after that of St Benedict.

When the great Benedictine Order in later ages was divided into many autonomous families, or congregations, there arose in the seventeenth century (1621) that of St Maurus, which was approved by Popes Gregory XV. and Urban VIII.: it was divided into six provinces, and governed by an Abbot-General, who had his seat at Paris, in the Abbey of St Germain des Près. Its monks, known under the name of Maurists, gained a reputation for learning and piety, so that the word Maurist alone was a synonym, among the learned, for a man wholly given up to God and the study of History. These monks of the Order of St Benedict became rivals of those ancient monks, who, in the dark ages, transcribed the wisdom of antiquity, and transmitted it to us in historical documents. The former, who were chroniclers and transcribers, and the latter, who were masters in criticism, strengthened

[1] Annal. O. S. B., tom. i., appendix.

the foundations of History, by the science of records and chronology. Their labour was social, and directed by the Abbots, in their General Chapters, like any other matter that regarded the salvation of their souls. In their journeyings, and researches among archives, they dug up the whole middle age, and brought forth the treasures of its history, hidden in their monasteries, which were the laboratories of erudition and criticism : and thence afterwards came forth the great collections of the Fathers of the Church, of the *Acts* of the Martyrs, of the *Gallia Christiana*, and of French literature, of which they were the most illustrious representatives. No other men can be found who have ever deserved so well of the Church itself, and of civil society. These descendants of that Cassinese colony, which was led forth by Maurus to Glanfeuil, were the most precious gems in that crown, which the gratitude of historical students has bestowed on St Benedict.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. St Benedict's vision—2. How his sister Scholastica became Abbess over her nuns—3. The Abbess Justina at Capua—4. St Scholastica's monastery at Piumarola—5. Her last colloquy with St Benedict, and the miracle of the rain—6. Death of St Scholastica and the apparition of her soul to St Benedict—7. Her body buried at Monte Cassino—8. The Oratory of St Scholastica.

1. WHILST St Maurus was travelling through France, and giving his energies to the propagation of his Master's Order, St Benedict's life was drawing to a close. This life had been wholly hidden in Christ, and it might be said, as we have already remarked, that St Benedict appeared, whilst being on earth, to dwell in heaven; this was indicated by a bright light, which seemed to the onlooker to surround his personality.

The soul of this man, who at Subiaco had known how to dwell with himself, never afterwards ceased to remain in this solitary contemplation and intuition of the things of God. And there is no doubt that God rewarded it with secret revelations to his intellect, and a sweet diffusion of love in his heart. Of this reward God wished to give a sensible proof, which, as the interlocutor Peter, in St Gregory's *Dialogues*, affirms, was "very wonderful and exceedingly stupendous." It is thus narrated by the Pope himself:[1]

[1] *Dialog.*, cap. xxxv. "Alio quoque tempore Servandus diaconus atque abbas ejus monasterii, quod in Campaniae partibus a Liberio quondam patricio fuerat constructum, ad eum visitationis gratia ex more convenerat. Ejus quippe monasterium frequentabat; ut quia idem quoque vir doctrina gratiae celestis influebat, dulcia sibi invicem vitae verba transfunderent, et suavem cibum caelestis patriae, quia adhuc perfecte gaudendo non poterant, saltem suspirando gustarent. Cum vero hora jam quietis exigeret, in cuius turris superioribus se Venerabilis Benedictus, in eius quoque inferioribus se Servandus diaconus conlocavit: quo videlicet in loca inferiora superioribus pervius continuabat ascensus. Ante eamdem vero turrem longius erat habitaculum, in quo utriusque discipuli quiescebant. Cumque vir Domini Benedictus, adhuc quiescentibus fratribus, instans vigiliis,

" On another occasion Servandus, the Deacon and Abbot of that monastery in Campania, which had been built in former times by the Patrician Liberius, came, according to his custom, to visit him. He frequently came to the monastery, because he also was a man full of heavenly wisdom, and they entertained one another with the sweet words of Eternal Life ; they sighed together for that delightful food of the celestial country which they could not yet fully

nocturnae orationis tempora praevenisset, ad fenestram stans, et omnipotentem Dominum deprecans, subito intempesta noctis hora respiciens, vidit fusam lucem desuper cunctas noctis tenebras effugasse, tantoque splendore clarescere, ut diem vinceret lux illa, quae inter tenebras radiasset. Mira autem valde res in hac speculatione secuta est: quia sicut post ipse narravit, omnis etiam mundus velut sub uno solis radio collectus, ante oculos ejus adductus est. Qui venerabilis Pater, dum intentam oculorum aciem in hoc splendore curuscae lucis infigeret, vidit Germani Capuani episcopi animam in sfaera ignea ab angelis in caelum ferri. Tunc tanti sibi testem volens adhibere miraculi, Servandum diaconum iterato bis terque ejus nomine, cum clamoris magnitudine vocavit. Cumque ille fuisset insolito tanti viri clamore turbatus, ascendit, respexit, partemque jam lucis exiguam vidit. Cui tantum hoc stupescenti miraculum, vir Dei per ordinem, quae fuerant gesta narravit, statimque in Casinum castrum religioso viro Theopropo mandavit ut ad Capuanam urbem sub eadem nocte transmitteret, et quid de Germano episcopo ageretur agnosceret et indicaret. Factumque est, et reverentissimum virum Germanum episcopum is, qui missus fuerat, jam defunctum reperit, et requirens subtiliter agnovit eodem momento fuisse illius obitum, quo vir Domini ejus cognovit ascensum.

" *Petrus.*—Mira res valde, et vehementer stupenda. Sed hoc quod dictum est, quia ante oculos ipsius quasi sub uno solis radio collectus omnis mundus adductus est, sicut nunquam expertus sum, ita nec conjicere scio quonam ordine fieri potest, ut mundus omnis ab homine uno videatur.

" *Gregorius.* — Fixum tene, Petre, quod loquor: quia animae videnti Creatorem angusta est omnis creatura. Quamlibet, etenim parum de luce Creatoris aspexerit, breve ei fit omne quod creatum est : quia ipsa luce visionis intimae mentis laxatur sinus tantumque expanditur in Deo, ut superior existat mundo ; fit vero ipsa videntis anima etiam super semetipsam. Cumque in Dei lumine rapitur super se, in interioribus ampliatur ; et dum se sub se conspicit exaltata, comprehendit quam breve sit quod comprehendere humiliata non poterat. Vir ergo qui intueri globum igneum, angelos quoque ad caelum redeuntes videbat, haec procul dubio cernere nonnisi in Dei lumine poterat. Quid itaque mirum si mundum ante se collectum vidit, qui sublevatus in mentis lumine extra mundum fuit? Quod autem collectus mundus ante ejus oculos dicitur, non caelum et terra contracta est, sed videntis animus est dilatatus qui in Deo raptus videre sine difficultate potuit omne quod infra Deum est. In illa ergo luce, quae exterioribus oculis fulsit, lux interior in mente fuit, quae videntis animum, quia ad superiora rapuit, ei quam angusta essent omnia inferiora monstravit."

ST BENEDICT'S VISION OF ST GERMANUS GOING TO HEAVEN.

enjoy. When it was now the hour to rest, the venerable Father Benedict betook himself to the higher room of the Tower, and Servandus to the lower one: both these rooms communicated with each other by a staircase. In front of this Tower was a dormitory, in which the disciples of both slept.

When the man of God, Benedict, whilst the Brethren were sleeping, rose to pray, before the usual time of matins, and was standing at the window in devout worship before God, suddenly, in the dark midnight, there shone a light from Heaven, so bright that it overpowered the nocturnal darkness, and even surpassed the light of day. And in the midst of that contemplation a remarkable fact happened; for, as he afterwards narrated, the whole world, gathered, as it were, within one ray of light, appeared before his eyes. And whilst the venerable Father stood intently gazing at the brightness of that glittering light, he saw the soul of Germanus, the Bishop of Capua, carried by angels up to Heaven in a fiery globe. Wishing to have a witness of so great a miracle, he called Servandus, two or three times, in a loud voice. Servandus, troubled at this unusual calling by the man of God, went up to him, looked out, and saw a faint glimpse of the fading light. Wondering at so great a miracle, the man of God gave him a full account of what happened, and at once ordered Theopropus, a religious man at Cassinum, to send to Capua the same night, in order to find out and let him know what had happened to Germanus, the Bishop. He who had been sent discovered that the holy Bishop was already dead, and, on careful enquiry, found that he passed away at the same moment in which the man of God saw him carried up to Heaven."

Peter. "This is a wonderful thing, and exceedingly stupendous. What has been said, viz., that the whole world was gathered within one ray of light before his eyes, has never come under my experience, and I do not know how it could happen that the whole world should be seen by one man."

Gregory. "Take special notice of what I say, Peter: To a soul that sees the Creator, every creature is small. To him who sees God even by a glimpse of light, every created thing becomes insignificant, because, by that internal light, the capacity of the soul is enlarged, and is so dilated in God that it transcends the world; the soul of one that thus sees rises also above itself. And when, in the light of God, it is rapt above itself, it is inwardly enlarged; and when it is thus exalted and looks downward, it comprehends what, in its inferior state, it was unable to understand. The man of God, therefore, who saw the globe of fire and the angels returning to Heaven, could not, doubtless, see them except in the light of God. What wonder, therefore, that he should see the whole world gathered together, who, in the interior light of his soul, was rapt beyond the world? But, when the world is said to be gathered before his eyes, it is not meant that the heavens and earth were contracted, but that the soul of him that saw was enlarged, and was able, in the light, to see without difficulty all that was below God. Therefore, whilst one light shone into the eyes of his body, another shone into his interior soul, and showed him, whilst he gazed in that state of rapture, how small all things of earth were."[1]

Peter, to whom Pope Gregory explains these things, blesses, as it were, his dulness, as being the occasion of this long exposition; and, being content with the knowledge given him, the narrator turns to something else. But those, who have come after, have not been content, and they have wished to know if, by that supernatural light in which St Benedict was rapt in God, and made to see the universe in God, he means an intuitive vision of the Divine Essence. There has been much discussion among the learned on this point; but to enter into such profound theological discussions is both difficult and perilous, and I do not consider myself learned enough to satisfy the reader fully on this subject. I will only say that the Gregorian narrative clearly attributes the uncommon privilege of the intuitive vision of

[1] Dialog., lib. ii. cap. xxxv.

God to him who was full of the spirit of all the saints. St Gregory, that great Doctor of the Church, clearly speaks of two lights; one which, coming down from the heavens, dispelled the darkness of night, and was sensible to the eyes of the body, the other enlightening the interior soul; hence two objects were made visible, one corporeal, that is the illumination of the night, the other spiritual, which was God Himself, for the Saint was rapt in God beyond the world and himself. That this is clear from the words of St Gregory, not only I myself say, but also the Seraphic Doctor, St Bonaventure,[1] who affirms that St Benedict saw, in his vision, the whole world in God, before whom the creature is limited and insignificant. If this is not an intuitive vision, I know not what other can be. Nevertheless, I must not pass over in silence the fact, that the Angelic Doctor dissents from St Gregory and St Bonaventure;[2] and not being able, without apparent disrespect, to make them agree, I am glad to call to mind the opinion of the supreme Pontiff Urban VIII., who, in his Bull regarding the festival of St Benedict, affirms that this Saint merited, whilst yet in this mortal life, to see God Himself, and in God all that is below Him.[3]

I think I ought not to omit mentioning here the custom which St Benedict had of praying in the open air, especially at night time. It was at night that he ascended the mountain of Subiaco to pray that God would give water to his distressed Brethren; at night, when praying at the window, he had that wondrous vision above mentioned, and, when in the open air, he saw, in vision, the death of his sister Scholastica. The soul of this Apostolic man, in imitation of St Paul, was ever filled with the desire of being liberated from human corporeal forms, and of being with Christ. This intolerance of the confines of earth emancipated his spirit

[1] Lib. *De Luminaribus Ecclesiæ*, Sermo 20. "Mundus non fuit coangustatus in uno solis radio, sed ejus animus dilatatus, quia vidit omnia in illo, cujus magnitudine, omnis creatura angusta est, parva et modica."

[2] 2—2: qu. 180, art. 5, ad. 3, et quodl. 1. art. 1.

[3] Apud Tamburinum, tom. ii. disp. 24, qu. 5. "Deum ipsum, et in ipso Deo, adhuc mortalis, omne, quod infra Deum est, videre meruerit."

from the artificial forms of exterior worship, which, indeed, are very necessary to regulate the Christian's Faith, and gave it wings to roam through the firmament, where it came into more immediate contact with God. The boundless desert of the firmament, with its silence and the chaste splendour of its stars, spoke of primeval times: it was, as it were, a peristyle of that infinite oasis of peace which we call Paradise. What wonder that, from its portals, some ray of God's face should sometimes dart forth at the prayer of him who was the holiest man on the earth? Those who have lived long in the house of St Benedict yet feel some impression of that supernatural fact, however little their eyes may rest on the heights of the surrounding Apennines, on which the light of that ray descended, and from which St Benedict gazed into the depths of the wonders of God. The mountains, slow in geological transformations, are the most solid and authentic witnesses of History.

2. The most tender ties of his life were now broken—Placid in Heaven, Maurus in France. One only, the most dear, yet remained and bound him to the earth, and this was the love of his sister Scholastica. They were twins, being born at the same time, and they must have turned their thoughts at the same time to that Heaven whence they came. St Gregory says that Scholastica dedicated herself from her infancy to God, and he says no more regarding her life. This silence, as it has, through the testimony of historical documents, permitted the belief that she became a nun and the mother of all the women gathered together in a definite place for the service of God, after the example of her brother, gave also such liberty to criticism, that it has not allowed her to have been in such a position of authority, nor has it even been willing to permit that the Saint lived in monastic community. But Cassinese traditions, supported by historical documents, are such as to change conjecture into certainty, and to blunt the weapon of criticism. It is certain that, after St Benedict had converted the inhabitants of the valley of the Liris, and had founded his first abbey

on Monte Cassino for the numerous disciples who crowded round him, women also assembled together under the guidance of his Rule.

There was in the valley, in the neighbourhood of Aquinum and the ancient *Interamna Lirinate*, a place called Piumarola (*Plumbariola*), which was inhabited by a great number of those who were converted to the Faith by the preaching of St Benedict, and where a great many persons, who lived in the valley, came for purposes of business; hence Pope Zachary, in his Greek version of St Gregory's *Dialogues*, remarks, by way of comment, that this was an emporium, or place of merchandise.[1]

The Saint's fame, and the desire of having his guidance, had drawn there a great many pious women, who, having consecrated their virginity to God, served Him under various forms of discipline; some lived together in a monastery; others lived, in twos or threes, in their own houses. These were under the care of St Benedict, who sent his monks to preach to them, and to keep them subject to the yoke of his Rule,[2] which they would not have followed, nor would they have been brought so near the monastery of Monte Cassino, if they had not been under his care and guidance. They are called *Sanctimoniales feminae*, who are pious women assembled together in one definite place under a Rule,—or nuns.[3]

St Gregory relates a fact regarding these religious women who lived in their own houses, which clearly shows us that St Benedict not only ruled over them with a providential charity, but also corrected them with the restrictive power of jurisdiction. There were two of them who, noble by ties of blood, lived in their own house at a short distance from Monte Cassino.[4] Whatever they needed from outside, a certain good man provided for them, deputed, perhaps, to this office by St Benedict. Blinded by their family pride, they did not see their provider's charity, by which he made

[1] Εμπόριον.
[2] *Dialog.*, lib. ii. cap. xix.
[3] Haeften, "Disquisit. Monast.," cap. xix.
[4] Loco proprio morabantur.

himself their servant; but, perhaps, on account of his want of *savoir faire*, and forgetting the sanctity of the habit they wore, they often used contumelious language to him. He, provoked to anger and not able to bear such ill-treatment any longer, went and laid his grievance before the Saint, who sent a message by him to the guilty nuns, that, if they did not restrain their tongues, he would excommunicate them. The threat proved vain and matters became worse. Now it happened, in a few days, that these two evil-tongued nuns died, and were buried in the church. But one day, during the sacrifice of the Mass, when the deacon, according to the custom of those times, admonished the catechumens and excommunicated to leave the Church, the nurse of the departed nuns, who approached the altar to make oblations for them, saw them come forth from their tombs and go out of the church. This same thing, having occurred many times, was told to the man of God. He gave an offering of his own to be taken to the altar, by which he meant to free them from the regular excommunication, and after this they were no more seen leaving the church at the word of the deacon. From this fact St Gregory gathers how infallible the word of the man of God was, not only in decreeing any punishment, but also in merely threatening it.[1]

There were, then, claustral nuns in the vicinity of St Benedict's Abbey, who were governed by an Abbess under the Benedictine Rule. If any one maintains the opinion of those who say that, in those times, there were not as yet any monasteries of women ruled over by an Abbess, I will remind him of the sepulchral epitaph of a certain Justina, Abbess of a monastery near Old Capua, which was discovered during last century in digging the foundations of the Franciscan Convent of St Mark, and was published by Muratori and Mazzocchi.[2]

[1] Dialog., cap. xxiii. See Haeften's note, p. 141.

[2] Mazzocchi. *In vetus marmoreum sanctae Neapolitanae ecclesiae Kalendorium, commentarius*, tom. i. mens. Febr. die x. fol. 37.

"Nec aliunde quam Scholasticae exemplo, monasteria muliebria, in Campania primum, mox in reliqua Italia passim propagata crediderim. Capuae certe sub

3. There was, therefore, an Abbess Justina, who founded a monastery of nuns, for the words *sancti loci*, in Campania, near Old Capua, can signify nothing else; she lived eighty-five years, and was buried on the 1st of November in the year 569, in the time of the Emperor Justinian. The learned Mazzocchi does not hesitate to affirm, from this inscription, that, through St Scholastica's example, the institution of Benedictine nuns took root in Campania and spread throughout all Italy. This opinion appears to me to be well supported by chronology. Justina had lived in the time of St Benedict and his sister St Scholastica, who both died about the year 543, and she survived them twenty-six years.

There being in Campania no other founder of a Monastic Order with a definite Rule, there is no doubt that Justina was a disciple of St Scholastica. How she afterwards went and founded a monastery of nuns in Old Capua, can easily be conjectured from the friendship which existed between St Benedict and Germanus, the Bishop of that city. No one will wonder that St Benedict, being anxious to propagate his Order in Sicily, France, and other nearer countries, like Terracina, should recommend to his friend Germanus the first offshoot of his sister's monastery, taken by Justina into the metropolis of his diocese. Hence it is also clear that Scholastica, even in the first years of her religious life, did not go and live near her brother, in the solitude of Subiaco, where St Gregory does not mention that there were any nuns, but at Monte Cassino, where Benedict's fame had spread as the legislator of the Monastic Order, and she

exitum vitae St Scholasticae, puellare Monasterium fuisse fundatum, a quadam Justina didici, ex inedita inscriptione eruta apud Veterem Capuam, dum effoderentur fundamenta Coenobii S. Marci, quod incolunt Franciscani excalceati. Ea inscriptio est talis :

"HIC REQVIESCIT IN SOMNO PACIS IVSTINA ABBATISSA, FVNDATRIX SANCTI LOCI HVIVS, QVAE VIXIT PLVS MINVS ANNOS LXXXV, DEPOSITA SVB DIE KALENDARVM NOVEMBRIVM IMPERANTE DOMINO NOSTRO IVSTINO DD AVGVSTO ANNO III. POST CONSVLATVM EIVSDEM INDICTIONE TERTIA.

"Infra uvae racemos scalpitur : quod in christianis titulis, maxime Campanis, frequens est. De hac inscriptione, quae ad annum 569, hoc est quintum et vicesimum circiter, a Scholasticae obitu, etc."

became Abbess in that place called *Plumbariola*, in which St Gregory affirms that nuns dwelt. This matter is confirmed by the documents of Ecclesiastical History, and the uninterrupted Cassinese tradition.

4. In a Life of St Scholastica, written in a certain metrical form of verse used by Paul the Deacon, and, therefore, attributed to him, it is clearly said that, as St Benedict built himself a home on the top of the mountain, so his sister took up her abode in the bosom of the valley, for, as it has already been stated, she left her country, after the example of her brother, and came to Monte Cassino. In another poem, by the same writer, it is said that she presided over and taught the nuns,—in other words, that she was their Abbess, and that her house was a monastery near to her brother's, in order that she might not be separated from him. In the ninth century the Abbot Bertarius, a Cassinese, bears clear testimony to the existence of St Scholastica's monastery in a sermon, when speaking of the monks who went to take possession of the Saint's body. "They arrived at the place," he wrote, "in which the virgin of the Lord had dwelt, and served God with other religious and holy virgins, whom she had instructed." . . . This monastery arose at a distance of three miles, as we have said, from the base of Monte Cassino, in the territory of Plumbariola. We are certain of this matter, not only by an ancient Cassinese tradition, but also by an historical fact, which confirms it.

Ratchis, King of the Lombards, having become a monk at Monte Cassino, his wife Tasia, and his daughter Ratrude, wished to consecrate themselves to God in the religious life; they chose no other place than Plumbariola wherein to build a new monastery, or to restore that of St Scholastica, which, like the monastery of Monte Cassino, had been destroyed in the devastations of Zoto the Lombard.[1] In the thirteenth century the Cassinese Abbot, Bernard, restored this monastery under the ancient title of St Petronilla, in honour of St Scholastica,[2] assigning to it possessions and privileges. And

[1] *Chron. Cas.*, Leonis, cap. viii. [2] Caplet, *Regestum* Bernardi Abbatis.

I must not omit to remark, with Mabillon,[1] that from the ninth century there existed, in this place, not only the monastery of St Petronilla, for women, but also one for men, under the title of St Mary of Plumbariola, as appears from a privilege of exemption, which was granted to the religious Abbot of the venerable monastery of St Mary, Mother of God, of Plumbariola, in the territory of Aquinum. This that learned man took from an ancient *Diurnum Romanum*, published in the *Museo Italico*.[2] If the illustrious John Bollandus[3] had turned his attention to these documents, and if he had known the topographical position of these two monasteries of Monte Cassino and Plumbariola, he would not have adopted the opinion that St Scholastica was not a real *sanctimonialis*, or cloistered nun in a monastery, and Abbess and mother of all the Benedictine nuns, and that finally she made an annual journey from Subiaco to Monte Cassino to converse with her brother on the things of God.

Scholastica and her brother Benedict, who, according to St Gregory, were but one soul in God, and had, after death, but one sepulchre for their bodies to rest in, could not be separated during life. When Scholastica received the intelligence of the building of the monastery of Monte Cassino, and that her brother had a fixed abode there, she set out to join him, and place herself under his guidance. She built the monastery of Plumbariola, in which, with other virgins, who had come together for the service of God, she lived till her death ; and there is no doubt that the monks, who were frequently sent by St Benedict to attend to the spiritual needs of the nuns in that part of the country, went to this monastery. We do not read that St Benedict, a strict observer of the monastic enclosure, went there himself. The word of those who came from Benedict, and the sight of the Abbey on the mountain top, were enough to cherish in Scholastica's heart the thought of her not-far-distant brother,

[1] *Annales*, tom. i. p. 54.

[2] Pag. 35. Prof. Siekel, in 1889, produced a very correct edition and learned explanation of it.

[3] Tom. ii., 10 Febr.

and to enable her to interchange with him, in spirit, those secret offices of charity, which sustained both in those high contemplations of that celestial country to which they were tending.

5. Only once a year was an interview granted by her brother to Scholastica at the foot of the mountain, in which, by mutual words of consolation and colloquies on heavenly things, they inflamed in each other's hearts the desire of running on in the path of virtue, and of arriving at that happy term where they would be united for ever. St Gregory only speaks of Sabinus, Bishop of Venosa, of Servandus the Deacon, Abbot of the monastery of Alatri, and of the brother of the monk Valentinian, who, at fixed times during the year, were accustomed to visit the Saint in order to refresh their minds with the spiritual food of his words, which were those of Eternal Life: but these persons were only an indication that many others did the same thing. Therefore, that which the man of God dispensed so generously to friends and devout persons, he could not refuse to his devout sister.

She, indeed, was wont to go, once a year, with her sisters, to meet her brother at the foot of the mountain, in a place belonging to Monte Cassino. In those times the enclosure for nuns was not as rigid as it is now. St Benedict did not allow his monks to wander outside the monastery, seeking for the necessaries of life; for everything was so arranged within, that there was no necessity to go out. But, either for the purpose of attending to souls, or for extraordinary business, permission was granted according to the will of the Abbot.[1] It was the same for the nuns. If it was lawful for the monks to go out in order to instruct them, it was also lawful for Scholastica and her sisters to go out of their monastery once a year, in order to see and hear the supreme guide of their souls.

The valley of the Liris is enclosed on the south by two ridges of mountains; they both stretch on towards it from

[1] *Reg.*, cap. lxvi.

Rome, the one rising on the left from the Latian Hills, and growing higher as it continues northwards, the other on the right looks towards the Mediterranean Sea. That going towards the north descends, at the distance of about a mile from Monte Cassino, into the territory of Aquinum, not far from the site of the ancient *Interamna Lirinate.* On the southern side, there is a little nook formed in the valley. There two torrents meet, which, coming down from Monte Cassino and the ancient Abbey of S. Maria of Albinata, through moderately deep channels, after great rains burst into the valley, and, taking the course of a small rivulet, dry in summer, and unable to contain them, they overflow and devastate the country. Just on the bank of this stream, at the spot where the floods meet, and on the rise of the mountain, was the house in which St Benedict and his sister Scholastica met.

See with what sweet simplicity St Gregory describes this meeting of brother and sister. I give his words in the vernacular.[1] His sister, who was called Scholastica, dedicated to God from her infancy, was accustomed once a year to come to him ; the man of God came here to meet her in a place belonging to the monastery, and not far from its gates. One day Scholastica went there, according to her custom, and the venerable man came down, with his disciples, to meet her : they passed the whole day in the praises of God and spiritual colloquies, and, as night was now drawing on, they supped together. As they were at table, engaged in conversation, and it was becoming late, the holy nun began to entreat him, saying : " I pray thee, do not leave me to-night ; let us remain here till morning, discoursing of the joys of the Heavenly Life." To whom he answered : " What is it thou sayest, my sister? I cannot by any means remain outside the monastery." The sky was so clear, that not a cloud was to be seen. The holy nun, hearing her brother's refusal, placed her joined hands on the table, and laying her head upon them, she prayed to Almighty God. When she lifted

[1] *Reg.*, cap. lxvi.

up her head from the table, there was such terrible thunder and lightning, and such a deluge of rain, that neither the venerable Father, nor the Brethren who were with him, could move a step outside the place where they sat. For the holy virgin, bending down her head upon her hands, had shed a flood of tears upon the table, and thereby changed the serenity of the heavens into rain. Nor did the downpour delay an instant after her prayer; but so simultaneous were her prayer and the storm, that, when she lifted her head from the table, it thundered; so that the lifting up of her head and the descent of the rain were at the same moment. Then the man of God, seeing that he could not set out to the monastery amidst the thunder and lightning and rain, began to make sorrowful complaints, saying: "May the Almighty God forgive thee, sister; what hast thou done?" She answered him: "Behold, I made a request of thee, and thou wouldst not hear me: I besought the Lord, and He has listened to me. Now, therefore, go forth, if thou art able; and leaving me, return to thy monastery." But he, not able to go out of the house, remained unwillingly on the spot where he would not willingly abide. Thus it came to pass that they kept vigil all night, and satisfied each other to the full with mutual discourse on heavenly things.[1]

[1] "Soror namque ejus, Scholasticae nomine, Omnipotenti Domino ab ipso infantiae tempore dicata, ad eum semel per annum venire consueverat. Ad quam vir Dei non longe extra januam in possessione Monasterii descendebat. Quadam vero die venit ex more, atque ad eam cum discipulis venerabilis ejus descendit frater: qui totum diem in Dei laudibus sacrisque colloquiis ducentes, incumbentibus iam noctis tenebris, simul acceperunt cibos. Cumque adhuc ad mensam sederent, et inter sacra conloquia tardior se hora protraheret, eadem sanctimonialis foemina soror ejus eum rogavit, dicens: 'Quaeso te, ut ista nocte me non descras, ut usque mane aliquid de coelestis vitae gaudiis loquamur.' Cui ille respondit: 'Quid est quod loqueris, soror? Manere extra cellam nullatenus possum.' Tanta vero erat coeli serenitas ut nulla in aëre nubes appareret. Sanctimonialis autem foemina, cum verba fratris negantis audisset, insertas digitis manus super mensam posuit, et caput in manibus omnipotentem Dominum rogatura declinavit. Cumque levaret de mensa caput, tanta coruscationis et tonitrui virtus, tantaque inundatio pluviae erupit, ut neque venerabilis Benedictus, neque fratres, qui cum eo aderant, extra loci limen quo consederant, pedem

The reason why Scholastica wished to prolong, through the whole night, those sweet colloquies, was the foreknowledge which she had of her approaching end. She did not grieve to leave for ever that earth, "above which, from her infancy, she had kept her soul raised, being absorbed in the contemplation of Paradise, of whose delights she wished to have some foretaste by conversing with her brother." Of such colloquies, at the close of life, we have examples in the lives of the saints, and especially in that of the great St Augustine, who, in his *Confessions*,[1] thus speaks of them, on the occasion of his being with his mother Monica at *Ostia Tiberina*, a little before her death. "We there were conversing alone very pleasantly; and, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, we were seeking, in the sight of the Truth, which Thou art, O Lord, of what kind would be the eternal life of the saints, which no eye hath seen, no ear heard, nor heart of man conceived; and, with the mouth of our thirsting hearts, longed for the supernal streams of Thy fountain." And, after narrating what a flood of affections and sighs broke forth from their hearts at this contemplation, he speaks of the death of every other human desire: "O Lord," he says, "Thou knowest that on that day, when we thus conversed, this world, with its pleasures, appeared contemptible to us, while we spake." And my mother said: "My son,

movere potuissent. Sanctimonialis quippe foemina caput in manibus declinans, lacrymarum fluvios in mensa fuderat, per quas serenitatem aëris ad pluviam traxit. Nec paulo tardius post orationem inundatio illa secuta est; sed tanta fuit convenientia orationis et inundationis, ut de mensa caput iam cum tonitru levaret: quatenus unum idemque esset momentum, et levaret caput et pluviam deponere. Tunc vir Dei inter coruscos et tonitrua atque ingentis pluviae inundationem videns se ad monasterium non posse remeare, coepit conqueri contristatus, dicens: 'Parcat tibi omnipotens Deus, soror: quid est quod fecisti?' Cui illa respondit: 'Ecce te rogavi, et audire me noluisti; rogavi Dominum meum, et audivit me. Modo ergo si potes, egredere; et, me dimissa, ad monasterium recede.' Ipse autem exire extra tectum non valens, qui remanere sponte noluit, in loco mansit invitus. Sicque factum est, ut totam noctem pervigilem ducerent, atque per sacra spiritalis vitae conloquia sese vicaria relatione satiarent."—*Dialog.*, lib. ii. cap. xxxiii.

[1] Lib. ix. cap. x.

as for myself, there is no longer anything which is a pleasure to me in this life."[1]

This, then, was the reason why the virgin sister of St Benedict so much desired those colloquies: to bid adieu to the earth, and, like those two saints, united in mind and heart, to draw near to the torrent of pleasure, which is God, and to get a foretaste of its delights.

6. As the day dawned, St Benedict returned with his disciples to his monastery, and Scholastica to hers. A few days after, as he was standing in his cell, at the window which looked westward, the soul of his sister appeared to him, freed from the body, and under the form of a dove, which took its flight up to heaven. As if participating in her glory and full of joy, he poured out his soul forthwith in hymns and thanksgiving to God. Then, calling together the Brethren, he made known the death to them, and, without delay, despatched them to take possession of the virginal body of his sister, and bring it to him. Being about to join her soon in heaven, he had already prepared for himself the place of his burial, and in this he placed the body of his sister. Thus it came to pass, as St Gregory remarks, that these two, who had only one soul in God whilst upon earth, were not separated in the tomb.

7. I wonder how it happens that all this Gregorian narrative regarding St Scholastica has not been sufficient to enlighten the mind of Bollandus, and prevent him from adopting an opinion so opposed to historical truth. That return of St Benedict to his monastery, after the colloquy, and the return of St Scholastica to hers, when considered in immediate relation, shows clearly that St Scholastica not only lived in a monastery, with other sisters, but that this monastery was near that of St Benedict, by the equal distance which both were from the place of their meeting. This matter is also confirmed by what is said: that is, that St Benedict announced the death of his sister, not to one of his disciples, but to all, perhaps assembled together,[2] and he

[1] Ap., Haeften, p. 160,

[2] "Fratribus denunciavit."

ordered all to go and take possession of the body, and bring it to Monte Cassino. This mission would have been fulfilled by some, and not by all, if Scholastica's monastery had been at a great distance. Benedict's home might be empty of monks for some hours, but not for days, which would have been necessary to go to and return from a distant place, in order to fetch the body of Scholastica.

8. I do not wish to leave the place, where the miracle of the rain happened, without mentioning that it was ever afterwards held in great veneration. A little church was built there, dedicated to the virgin Scholastica. And I find it stated by Peter the Deacon, in a codex of the Cassinese library,[1] that, in 1134, a certain lady of Frosinone, who had been cured of a malady through the intercession of St Scholastica, came to offer thanks in this Oratory, and gave a silver cord, which ran all round the walls, and that every year she had the feast-day of the Saint celebrated with great solemnity. Remains of that ancient Oratory are still to be seen, on which another was built in the sixteenth century, and is still standing. There rises by its side an old cypress tree, which, during the year in which the monastery of Monte Cassino was abolished by law, was struck by lightning on the very spot where the prayed-for rain and tempest had once such licence; but it yet stands as a memorial of the holy beginnings of the Order of St Benedict and of its threatened destruction. The ages and the storms have shaken it, but that Order yet lives on. It has its roots in the clay of the Faith.

[1] Marked 418, f. 76.

CHAPTER IX.

1. St Benedict foretells the day of his death—2. He dies in the arms of his disciples, and the vision which those at a distance had of the fact—3. The place of his sepulchre—4. Words of Mabillon in his honour—5. The form of his body in the rock at Rojate—6. His countenance in the paintings of Mazzaroppi.

1. A MAN who from his early youth had accustomed his soul, in the cave at Subiaco, to the contemplation of God and of the supernatural joys which are prepared for those who love Him on earth; who, all engrossed in these things, had a foretaste of them; who, not able to contain within his heart the delights which he experienced, was ever speaking with such effusion of heart as to draw persons from long distances to listen to the words of eternal life; such an one, during the whole of his life upon earth, had Paradise in his soul. To him death, which causes us such fear, was a freedom from the slavery of the body, a messenger of eternal liberty; and his life was only a longing for the hour of its coming, a compendium of the mystery of the copious Redemption of the world by the death of Jesus Christ. As in the vision above described, he had before his eyes the compendious image of the whole world, so had he also the foreknowledge of the day and the hour of his passage to that light, which revealed to him the birth of Christ within him. The Church calls the death of the just a birth. Certain saints, like the Apostles and St Benedict, are not delayed in their journey to heaven, to atone in Purgatory for faults which either they have not been conscious of, or have atoned for by the sorrows of life, which are always unequal to the joys of the glory which awaits us. That journey excludes every idea of time and place: there are no fatigues to endure, no snares to guard against. The body being wasted

away on the bed of suffering, the transfiguration of the human soul in God through Jesus Christ, which has already been begun during the sweet martyrdom of the Evangelical Counsels, is completed in the splendour of that glory which Christ allowed His favourite Apostles to see on Thabor. The Thabor of St Benedict was Monte Cassino. Blessed were those disciples who were chosen by him for the vision of his transfiguration! But more blessed those who, by the imitation of his life, have not only seen him, but have followed him in the grandeur of his triumph.

On the fortieth day after the death of his sister Scholastica, as he was conversing with some of his disciples around him, he foretold to them the day of his death, laying them under an obligation to keep his words secret, and intimating to one of those absent what indication they should have that his soul had left the body.

2. Only six days of life remained to him. Though sound of body, and there was no sign of approaching death, he wished his tomb to be opened. This was, perhaps, to admonish his disciples, that, in order to remove the fear of death, the most salutary means was to keep it present before their eyes. The man of God also wished to open the tomb, in order to see, for the last time, the body of his sister Scholastica, as if to die certain that his remains would always be near hers. This being done, a violent burning fever seized upon him; and his strength failing him more and more daily, he bade his disciples, on the sixth day, to carry him into the Oratory of St John. Here he received the Viaticum of the Sacred Body and Blood of Our Lord. It is not clear, according to Mabillon, whether he received the Holy Communion under both species of bread and wine, as examples are found in which the receiving under the species of bread alone is described in such words as St Gregory has used. Then, supported in the arms of his disciples, standing erect, and with his hands uplifted towards heaven, he breathed forth his soul amid the prayers of his children. What vigour of life in that resolution, to maintain

itself by every earthly power! Thus died St Benedict, like a saint,—yet like a Roman. If, as Suetonius writes, imperial pride lifted up Vespasian to meet death[1] standing, the humility of the Cross and the consciousness of having fulfilled an Apostolic mission supported at that hour the Founder of an Order which offered the breasts of its monastic legions as a firm bulwark of the Empire of Christ. Peter Damian, in a sermon on the Vigil of the Feast of St Benedict, says that he died lying on sackcloth, in the arms of a few of his disciples. But this is not historical. All his disciples supported him on his feet, not so much on account of his weakness, as to receive his last breath. All were with him in life; all were with him in death; because all wished to see him again in heaven. St Gregory says they prayed; there is no mention of lamentation and complaint. Their adieu was a promise to imitate and follow him. Lamentation would have been unwelcome to the conqueror, and would have ill-befitted those who had pledged themselves to follow him. Peter Damian addresses himself especially to the monks of Monte Cassino in these words: "Oh, blessed are they that live with you! Blessed are they who die in your society and holy exercises! For we may piously believe that that path which was once seen leading from Monte Cassino to Heaven, yet shines with lamps and tapestry; and as then the leader passed along it into Heaven, so may the army follow after."[2]

On the same day on which the Saint departed this life, two monks—one in the monastery of Monte Cassino, the other at a distance—had the same vision, as St Benedict predicted before his death. They saw, by Divine power, a path leading upwards from the spot whence the spirit of their Father had passed to God; that is, from before the altar of St John the Baptist, on that side of the Oratory which looks towards the east. That path reached up to heaven; it was covered with rich tapestry and illuminated all along with

[1] *Suetonius.* "In Vespasiano," cap. xxiv.: "Imperatorem, stantem, mori oportere."

[2] "Opusc.," 36, cap. xiv.

lamps. At the top was a man of venerable appearance, radiant with divine light, who asked them if they knew who had passed by that way into heaven. When they answered they knew not, he said: "This is the path by which Benedict, the Beloved of God, has gone up into heaven." The absent disciple, who by this vision learned the death of his Master, was St Maurus, who was at that time in France, as Faustus tells us in his Life of him. He was on his way to Mans, and, as it was near the festival of Easter, he stayed with his companions at the Monastery of Font-Rouge, which was built by St Romanus. Being in prayer at the third hour on Holy Saturday, he had the aforesaid vision, and going with his companions to St Romanus, he narrated to him in detail the things he had seen in spirit, making known to him the death of St Benedict and his entry into heaven. They congratulated one another on the glory of their Master, and celebrated Our Lord's Resurrection with all the greater joy. Maurus and his monks left the monastery on the following day. Romanus, in conversing with Maurus regarding the life of him to whom he had given the monastic habit, and who, on the mountains of Subiaco, had become the Father of Western Monachism, felt an impulse to leave the monastery which he had founded, and to follow Maurus and his Cassinese colony; but the thought of his own monks, and of death, which he felt to be near, prevented him.[1]

St Peter Damian and St Bernard agree in believing that path of the vision, so richly adorned and shining with lamps, to be a symbol of the Rule which St Benedict himself practised more strictly than others, for he could not teach what he did not carry out in his own life, and by that path all his disciples, who faithfully followed his guidance, arrived at the Kingdom of Heaven.

3. According to the more common opinion, St Benedict died on the 21st of March, in the year 543. His disciples laid his body by the side of that of his sister Scholastica in

[1] Faustus, *Vita sti. Mauri.*—Act., SS. O. S. B.

the sepulchre which he had prepared for himself under the altar of St John the Baptist, in the same spot where formerly stood that altar of Apollo which he destroyed. Under this was a crypt, or cave, from which the priests of Apollo, unseen, gave their answers, and there, at this day, are St Benedict's relics venerated. There can be no doubt regarding the site of this sepulchre, for, as there is only one summit of the mountain, where the altar of St John the Baptist has stood for thirteen centuries, there alone, and nowhere else, have the faithful always come to venerate the treasure which is hidden there. We do not find mentioned in any Cassinese documents, nor sculptured in stone by the monks, any sepulchral memorial to their master. I think that if to-day any words of praise were engraved on that sepulchre, the most fitting would be those which Alighieri put on the lips of this great Italian in the "Paradiso."[1]

If the reader finds, in the Life of St Maurus, written by Faustus, and afterwards interpolated by Odo, Abbot of Glanfeuil, that St Benedict was buried in the Church of St Martin, contrary to what his own disciples related to St Gregory, that is, that he was buried in the Church of St John the Baptist, he need not be astonished at it. The error belongs to the interpolator of Faustus. Forgetting the time at which Faustus wrote, he often attributes to him what St Gregory wrote regarding St Benedict a century after his death. The place of the Saint's tomb was always the altar of St John the Baptist, as Leo of Ostia states;[2] and it was also the place where the bones of monks, remarkable for sanctity, were placed, as well as of those who, through devotion to St Benedict, had wished to lie, when dead, near his remains. I may remark that the Oratory of St Martin, being within the precincts of the monastery, was not so suitable a place as that of St John the Baptist, which was built outside, on the top of the mountain, to receive the bodies of the dead.

[1] Canto xxii. 37, and following.

[2] *Chron.*, lib. i. cap. i.

The bones and the ashes of St Benedict yet repose in the spot where Angelo della Noce, Abbot of Monte Cassino, found them in 1659,—that is, under the high altar of the Cassinese Basilica, on the right hand side, looking from below. The French monk, Simon Millet,[1] about a century earlier, saw the tomb, which had the form of a little altar, supported by two marble columns, under which two lamps were always burning. And before this period there was, in the pavement, a marble slab, on which these words were engraven : " The sepulchre of the holy Father Benedict and of the holy virgin Scholastica, his sister ; as their minds were but one in God, so their bodies were not separated in the tomb." Sylvestro Maurolico, cited also by Haeften in his History of all Religious Orders, when speaking of St Benedict, relates that, being deputed by Philip the Second of Spain to search out MSS. in the provinces of his kingdom, for the library of St Lawrence in the Escurial, one fell into his hands, in 1584, which, in giving an account of Monte Cassino and the death of St Benedict, contained this sepulchral epitaph :—

"Nursia me genuit, specus abdidit alta, Casini[2]
Me rapuit vertex, aula beata tenet."

Sylvestro wonders that this inscription should have been forgotten or not recorded by the Cassinese chronicler, but I wonder rather that this writer could attribute to the times of Leo of Ostia an inscription which, to me, savours of the time in which he himself wrote. It is certain that neither Paul the Deacon, nor Leo, nor other later Cassinese writers, make any mention of an inscription being placed in ancient times on St Benedict's sepulchre.

When the Cassinese Basilica was restored and embellished, as we see it to-day, the high altar was renewed, according to the design of Michael Angelo. And, in order to mark where the sepulchre was, a niche, or *loculus*, was opened in the lower part of the altar facing the choir, within which two

[1] See Haeften, *Disquisit. Monasticarum*, p. 181.
[2] For the word *obtulit* I have substituted *abdidit.*

recumbent figures of St Benedict and St Scholastica were painted by the Cavaliere d'Arpino (Giuseppe de Cesare); and, out of reverence, the sepulchre was hung round with thirteen lamps, which burned night and day. Over the niche the Abbot Angelo della Noce had these words carved :—

" BENEDICTVM ET SCHOLASTICAM
VNO IN TERRIS PARTV EDITOS,
VNA IN DEVM PIETATE COELO REDDITOS
VNVS HIC EXCIPIT TVMVLVS
MORTALIS DEPOSITI PRO AETERNITATE CVSTOS."

4. In what great veneration the memory of St Benedict has always been held, both in the Western and the Eastern Church, I will not say, for it is known to all ;[1] nor shall I, as is usual, in concluding his life, attempt to praise, for I have neither mental power enough to grasp his high merit before God and men, nor capability to express it in language. I will rather cite the panegyric of John Mabillon, that giant of historical criticism, who, in the seventeenth century, when brought into the presence of Louis XIV. by the minister Colbert, was called by the King the most learned and the humblest man in France. He, after narrating the death of St Benedict, breaks forth into these words :—Oh that I had eyes penetrating enough to see into the virtues and the interior worth of this man, and that I might contemplate and speak of them ! What a rich example for us ; what an abundance of virtues for our imitation in a man so great that, as St Gregory tells us, he was full of the spirit of all the just ! Who can comprehend and express in words the gifts of his soul ; his perseverance in abstinence, in fasting, in watching, in prayer ; his mind always fixed on God, day and night ? Not an instant did he take from the service of God to give

[1] Let the reader consult the learned preface of the illustrious Abbot of Grottaferrata D. Giuseppe Cozza Luzi, prefixed to the Historia S.P.N. Benedicti a Ss. Pontificibus Romanis Gregorio I. descripta et Zacharia Graece reddita, nunc primum a Codicibus saeculi VIII. Ambrosiano et Cryptensi—Vaticano edita, et notis illustrata : printed by the Abbey of Crypta Ferrata, at Tusculum, in 1880. In that preface the reader will find how great charity animated the two families of the great legislators Basil and Benedict, and how much the latter is glorified in the Greek liturgy of the Basilians.

it to ease or earthly things; and this Sulpicius praises in his Life of St Martin. Imitating St Antony, he admired the virtues of the ancients in such a way as to make them live again in himself. A rival of Basil, he was either the inventor, or the imitator, or the perfector, of all that was good. He had all kinds of virtues in himself in such abundance, that he appeared to be the special cultivator of each, and the possessor of only one. After the example of St Honoratus, he detested all excess and that desire of glory which separation from the rest of men produces. He tempered his Rule in such a way as to leave the strong with a desire of doing more, and the feeble without fear of its rigour, alleging that it was nothing more than a simple standard of upright living, and a beginning of holy life. He endeavoured to govern those under him rather by love than to lord it over them by fear, as Hilary tells us was done by St Honoratus, so that a restraint, more gentle than harsh, might give decorum to their mode of living, and show that they were not driven to duty by force. It is incredible how careful he was lest any one should become a victim of immoderate sadness; nevertheless, when reason demanded it, he corrected the culpable, not with flattery or timidity, but boldly and freely. Thus, of two evils, one was the cure of the other, for he tempered rigour by meekness, flexibility and benignity by gravity and firmness. His whole manner, his every act, was an example. Thus, not only by word, but by silence, did he act the part of censor.

Let each one think what kind of disciples those must have been, who lived under such a teacher and master What else were the monasteries of our Order but gymnasiums of piety, in which each one strove rather to be than to appear excellent; in which solitude and a hidden life were looked upon as the highest glory, poverty was regarded as wealth, and silence as eloquence. Oh, how beautiful would our lives be if our interests were so regulated!"[1]

5. We know nothing of St Benedict's external figure and

[1] Mabillon, An. O.S.B., tom. i. p. 175.

appearance. Perhaps after his happy death, the disciples who loved him so much, and preserved the living memory of it in their hearts, endeavoured by some sensible sign of picture or sculpture to fix it and transmit it to posterity, during those forty years that elapsed up to the invasion of the Lombards; but, if they did so, the Barbarians, in the ruin of the monastery, must have destroyed such a precious treasure. Not being able to obtain any arguments regarding his physical form, either from any monument of art, or account of contemporary writer, I may be allowed to mention a very ancient pious tradition which yet survives among the people of Rojate, a place not very far from Subiaco. It is said that, during the time of a great pestilence, St Benedict came there to spend the night, but that the inhabitants could not give him hospitality for fear of his bringing the plague amongst them. The Saint, thus refused lodging, went and lay on a large rock, and there slept for the night. Next morning, when he had arisen, the people of Rojate found there the impression of his entire body as distinctly made, as if it had been cut by the chisel. And it happens every year, on the Saint's feast, that the rock transudes and sends forth, through the cavity of the impression, a great quantity of water, which, as the festival day draws to a close, ceases to flow, and the rock becomes dry as before. Many persons go on the 21st of March to see that periodical fact, which, as it cannot occur by the laws of nature, is regarded as miraculous; and the water of that spring is gathered up and piously preserved. The impression shows the form of a man powerful of body, the length from head to foot being nearly six feet (metro 1. 95).

6. With regard to the appearance of the countenance, I find another tradition in the Monastery of Monte Cassino. It is said that, in the seventeenth century, Marco Mazzaroppi, of Piedmont, who studied the art of painting in Venice, came to execute in this Abbey some oil paintings of the Life of St Benedict. Not knowing what kind of appearance the Saint had, one night, as he related, he had so clear a vision

of it, that he ever afterwards reproduced it in his paintings, as in that over the altar in the crypt of the Basilica, and in that which is in the sanctuary of the Tower. In the former the head is somewhat elevated, and the eyes intent on something of Heaven ; the countenance is aged, but yet not faded like that of a man who has spent sixty years, which is the age at which he is said to have died, under the subduing Habit of penance. It is related, in the Life of St Placid, that when Tertullus came to visit him at Monte Cassino, he found him worn out by abstinence, *Corpore prae abstinentia exhaustum.* And Faustus, in his Life of St Maurus, says :— "He rigidly subjugated his body by fasting, abstinence, watching, and exposure to cold. Hence we have often seen him, during Lent, without tunic or hood, clothed in sackcloth, and only twice in the week tasting, rather than eating, a crust of bread. This was a custom which the holy Benedict followed during the whole of his life." But the pale countenance in Mazzaroppi's picture is suffused with ethereal peace ; the beard is white and uncut ; the eyes are of one who prays and feels the consciousness of a favourable answer ; hence the pupil overflows, as it were, with tears and joy, through a foretaste of those delights of love which, like a torrent, inebriate those who are in Heaven. It is the picture which is found faithfully reproduced at the beginning of this book.

This mystical image, which came into the painter's mind, as he said, he knew not how, got its colouring from him who had studied in the school of Giovanni Bellini and Titian. Hence that representation has assumed a sensible character to the sons of St Benedict by a threefold truth, of inspiration, paternity, and example.

Those features were ever afterwards, as has been said, reproduced by Mazzaroppi in all his pictures which are in the Abbey of Monte Cassino. In that painting in the Tower, the Saint is not in the act of contemplation, but kneeling before the Blessed Virgin, with extended arms, and, as he points with his hand to his beloved Monte Cassino, imploring

the blessing of Mary's Son. The severe beauty of Our Lady, her queenly repose, the union of matronly beauty with her virginal innocence, the Raffaelesque grace of the Divine Child, who, with eyes raised to heaven, blesses the petitioner, are so combined, in this work of art, as to make it worthy of being placed among the most valuable paintings of the Venetian School. Whoever would know St Benedict, let him go to the painting in the crypt, and kneel before that in the Tower. I do not attribute any strictly historical value to the impression on the rock at Rojate, or to the likeness of St Benedict painted by Mazzaroppi, but I wished to record the two facts as indicative, not of the truth of things, but of the opinion of others. It is certain that Belisario Corenzio, Giordano, and others of the Neapolitan School, who decorated the Cassinese Basilica with frescoes descriptive of the life of St Benedict, reproduced in them the features expressed by Mazzaroppi.

CHAPTER X.

1. St Benedict in civil society through his Order—2. St Benedict and Cassiodorus—3. He was the sole dispenser of the charity of the Church in the Middle Ages—4. Continuity of his work and the foreknowledge he had of it—5. Propagation of his Rule—6. St Gregory the Great—7. Civilising course of St Benedict: England converted to Christ—8. Fruit of his Apostolate—9. He ever lives in the English consciousness—10. St Aldhelm and Newman—11. A word of advice to the English Benedictines—12. St Benedict in Germany—13. St Boniface and his Anglo-Saxon monks—14. The Benedictine City, Schools, Libraries, Cathedrals—15. Benedictine nuns in Germany in the eighth century—16. The Benedictines and the *Sisters of Charity*—17. The Apostolate of St Benedict judged by Protestants.

1. THE life of St Benedict, as far as we have thus narrated it, regards only his relations with God and his monastic family; this is not sufficient to make the reader understand the mission which he received from God to preach Christ by his works, and to extend His reign in civil society by means of the Evangelical Counsels. The Evangelical Counsels are put in the Gospel as a principle, which, in Oriental Monachism, was developed in the deserts of Egypt and Palestine by many legislators, and especially by that greatest of all, Basil, whom, in his Rule, St Benedict calls Father. It is with reason that he thus names him; for from Basil's monastic Institutes did he receive the teaching of those Counsels as a principle already in action, by which he himself became also a legislator, in order that, going forth beyond the monastic enclosure, he might penetrate amid the disordered peoples of the West, to reorganise society and make it fruitful.[1]

The Evangelical Counsels flowered in the East, and their

[1] These thoughts, which I touched on in the Prologue, exactly coincide with those beautiful words of St Hildegarde, lib. ii. vis. v.: "Prima lux diei, fidelia verba apostolicae doctrinae designat; aurora initium conversationis quae primum in solititudine et in speluncis post illam beatam doctrinam germinavit, demonstrat; sol autem discretam et bene dispositam viam in servo meo Benedicto declarat."

fragrance delighted and drew as many minds in the West to follow Christ Crucified, as were found in monastic communities before the birth of St Benedict. But that spiritual teaching had not yet produced the fruit of the regeneration of civil society. Saints abounded, but civil society became more and more dissolved through those poisonous corruptions which the Pagan Empire had left behind it as a heritage, and by the lax orthodoxy of the Byzantine Emperors, who made the Labarum of Constantine an ensign of theological parties and heresy. Justinian codified and published laws, but laws did not heal the social wounds, because the forces of moral life were worn out, and the consciousness of Right, being lulled to sleep, had to bear in peace, as a law of inexorable fate, the injuries caused by the club of the Barbarian and the disgraceful slavery of Byzantium. The interior of man was the great thing to be cared for; the theory of dogma, set forth by such apologists as Justin, and by Doctors like Cyprian and Augustine, by Ambrose and others, who defended its integrity by their blood and learning, did not suffice for this purpose. For the memory of their preaching was yet fresh, and whilst, in the sanctuary, inviolate dogma maintained the Faith of an indefectible Church in city and country, the corruption of morals, in the sanctuary itself and in the civil orders, inspired the lamentations and wailings of Salvian, the Jeremiah of the decadence of the Roman Empire. Justinian jurists, reformers, and pioneers of a new civilisation do not enter into the interior of man, because they do not know the way, and because they are unequal to the practical teaching of the moral life of nations. The Church alone enters there by the way which the Apostles opened out—those teachers of the Evangelical Precepts which Christ Himself carried into practical effect, not in the splendours of His Transfiguration on Thabor, nor in the glory of His Resurrection, nor in the triumph of His Ascension into heaven, but in the ignominy of the Cross.

The formula of the Cross had its complete development in the unique act of the formation of the Church, which was

announced to the four quarters of the world by that terrible cry, *consummatum est.* But as soon as the Church came into being, it began the analytical unfolding of that formula in the practical life of nations, or in the history of Christian society; and the preaching of Christ Crucified will last as long as the world. In this name, in which there is salvation, life, and resurrection, the great regeneration of peoples is accomplished, when their moral reconstruction seems most hopeless. That name proclaims the victory of spirit over matter, of reason over force, abnegation even unto death. This is the truth which, in the form of monastic life, was implanted by the Church in the social body of men; and as by twelve uncultivated men the world was regenerated to the life of the spirit, so by a few monks was it civilised and put on the path of moral progress.

Whoever believes this truth will easily understand how the young hermit of Subiaco, precisely by his penance, has been able, with a few monks gathered under the standard of his Rule, to give practical form to Christ Crucified. The brief chronicle of his life, and the precepts of his Rule have not, in the eyes of the rationalist, any logical and proportionate relation with the whole history of the Benedictine Order. But to him who believes and reasons, that relation will appear so strict and intimate that he will see that St Benedict is the *only* Father of civilisation, through the long series of ages, in the collective individuality of his sons. The life of St Benedict is all in the life of his Order; so that the legend of St Gregory is amplified and developed into a real epic. For the intellect and the power to do what he accomplished was not the fruit of philosophical meditations, but of a special mission, which came to him from God through the Church. Without that mission, the history of the monastic life of St Benedict would have been confused with that of all those monks who preceded him in the West. Although they had a relation with God, inasmuch as He sanctioned their mode of life, they had no such immediate relation with civil society as to reconstitute it.

2. Whilst St Benedict united his holy disciples into brotherhood, and brought them under the juridical bond of his Rule, and built on Monte Cassino the typical monastery of his Apostolic mission, Cassiodorus, who, like Boëtius and Symmachus, had undertaken to subdue by Roman wisdom the Goths whom arms could not conquer, was erecting on the Gulf of Squillace, in the depths of Calabria, the great monastery of Viviers for cenobites. On the pleasant hills he built cells for anchorites, and he trained his monks to prayer and labour in such a way as to appear to be a rival imitator of St Benedict. The example of the ancient Fathers of the desert, his own teaching, after the custom of the Founders of other monasteries in and beyond Italy, constituted their standard law, but without that which I have called the juridical bond of an immutable Rule. His riches, his learning, the fame of the exalted ministry which he exercised in the Court of Ravenna from Theodoric to Vitiges,—all co-operated to make his monastery a refuge of peace for the strong Roman spirits who had fallen from the summit of ancient glories. But if he himself, more as a philosopher than as a monk, had not described, with much charm of style, the natural beauties of the country and the peaceful life of his cenobites, no history of these things would have come down to us, so silent and so mysterious was the course of his long life and of all the good which he did. The monasticism of Cassiodorus, with all the forms of Benedictine mysticism, was made too much a matter of reasoning by a Christian mind, which, saddened by the wickedness of the times, and despairing of overcoming it, built for itself a monastery where it could be at rest and die. Between Ravenna and Squillacium there was no cave which could receive him as a penitent, and prepare him for a mission which had not been given him. For this reason the teaching of Viviers, after his death, was a young shoot which withered on his tomb, leaving there the flowers of its spring-time; but that of Monte Cassino was a tree which, after St Benedict died, covered with its branches the whole of

Europe, and under its shade History took its seat and began to write the first chapter of the Genesis of Christian civilisation.

3. If it is true that the life of St Benedict is identified with, and continued in that of his Order, I ought perhaps to give here its *Annals*—that is, those of the entire Middle Ages ; but this would be a task quite out of proportion with the scope of this book. Moreover, since this history is already well known, it will be sufficient if I recall to the mind of the reader what relation St Benedict's life bears to the diffusion of those benefits, which, in the times of the Barbarians, and even in civilised times, have flowed from the bosom of the Church on the human generations that have believed in Christ. All, like new-born infants, suck at that breast, being nourished by the milk of Faith which ever flows forth ; and all, at every sip of that Divine nutriment, feel, with the life which they drink in, a refreshing solace for every sorrow. In those times of pause in the course of civil progress, in that multitude of evils, in those dark periods of ignorance regarding human and Divine things, in that uncertainty of a better future, St Benedict, in his Order, was the faithful servant appointed by the Church to be the sole dispenser of those treasures which afterwards were distributed by many hands amongst the family of Christ. Whoever will go through the countries of the whole of Europe, between the sixth century and the times of the Rénaissance, will find only one man, who, all to all, as at Monte Cassino, a missionary of the Faith, leads the Barbarians to the *Verità che tanto ci sublima ;* [1] who transcribes the monuments of Greek and Roman wisdom ; who, by the simple Chronicle, keeps up the continuity of History ; who dries up the marshes ; who subdues the forests, and, with his Latin plough, goes along turning up the earth and casting in the seeds of future political economy ; who, in his Abbeys, sets up chairs of learning, the cradles of modern Universities ; who extends the bounds of his monasteries, and changes them into cities. A champion

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gratuitously given to him, did not read future events in the book of historical deductions, but in the mind of Him who is the Supreme Reason of History. That supernatural vision of the whole world, epitomized in a single ray of light, was a formal Divine revelation of the continuity of his work, epitomized in his capacious mind, as a mighty factor in regard to so great a part of the universe. Indeed, when St Gregory describes his death, he says that, with hands lifted up to Heaven, *stetit*—an eloquent word, which shows that the dying Saint, on his journey to Heaven, did not raise his feet from the earth, on which he was to pursue a course of beneficence through many ages, *pertransiens benefaciendo*, in imitation of Christ.

5. This moral course, pursued by St Benedict, consisted entirely in the propagation of his Rule which, during his lifetime, was diffused, not only through Sicily and France, as we have related, but also through Italy. Besides the twelve monasteries at Subiaco, he presided over the erection of those of Terracina.[1] We have a clear and direct argument for this in the following letter of a certain Abbot of a Monastery near Fondi to the Cassinese abbot Simplicius, the second successor of St Benedict, which Angelo Della Noce brought to light from the Cassinese Archives:[2]—"To the most Reverend Father of monks, the Blessed Abbot of the monastery, near the city of Fondi.—We know by experience how the variously gifted Superiors of many Monasteries have drawn up different Rules of Life there. Hence already all the Monasteries of the Provinces of Campania, Sannita, Valeria, Tuscany, Liguria, and other places in Italy have resolved to observe that certain and right Rule of Life, which the most holy Benedict, thy Master, so dear to God, had instituted; because, whilst observing this, no one dares to deviate to the right or left. I have determined, therefore, to give it to be observed by this Congregation in the monastery over which, though unworthy, I have been elected Abbot. Being desirous of faithfully following, in this Monastery, what is

[1] Dialog., lib. ii. cap. xxii. 4.

[2] *Chron. Cass.* lib. v. cap. xxix.

observed in that of Monte Cassino, we have wished to send to your Reverence two monks of our congregation, Hugh and Paul, in order that they may be instructed in the Cassinese Congregation regarding the observances of that holy Rule. We recommend them to the care of your Paternity, and humbly beg you will receive them. From the monastery, near the city of Fondi, the 26th day of March."

From this letter of the Abbot of Fondi to a disciple of St Benedict, it is clear how rapid was the propagation of the Benedictine Rule in Italy. Not only did new monasteries arise, but even those which were already governed by particular statutes embraced those of St Benedict, as in the beginning, on the mountains of Subiaco, where twelve monasteries were founded and governed by the Saint. Indeed, whilst he was yet living, he was requested by a pious man of Terracina to send him some of his disciples to establish a monastery on his property. St Benedict did so, choosing, himself, the Abbot and prepositus who were to govern it. To these he appeared in sleep, and designed for them, in order, all the parts of the new monastery, which was built according to what he had laid down.[1] Monasteries arose during the lifetime of the Saint in places given by the Patrician Tertullus. One of these was founded by St Placid in Sicily; others in the Pontian Archipelago, and on the shores of Gaëta, Tertullus, according to the author of St Placid's Life,[2] having given the islands of Diomede, Ponza, Ventotene, and Palmaria. This is confirmed by these words of St Gregory:—"Because the life of the monks in the islands is severe, we forbid youths to be received in these monasteries before they have attained their eighteenth year; and if there are any there already, remove them with thy usual prudence, and place them in Rome."[3] And here it may be remarked that from this

[1] *Dialog.*, lib. ii. cap. xxii. [2] *Acta* SS. O.S.B., tom. i. p. 52.

[3] "Quia autem dura est in insulis congregatio monachorum, etiam pueros in eisdem monasteriis ante decem et octo annorum tempora suscipi prohibemus."—Lib. i. epist. 50.

special care which the Pontiff takes of the Benedictine monks, it is inferred that he had assumed the habit and Rule. In one of these Cassinese monasteries in the island of Ponza, Belisarius, by command of the Empress Theodora, imprisoned Pope St Silverius, and forced him to become a monk, and there he died a martyr.

Monasteries arose, not only in those places given to St Benedict, but also elsewhere, through the zeal of his disciples, who, in imitation of St Maurus, either deputed by St Benedict, or, being requested to do so, propagated his Rule, and received followers into the monastic houses which they had built. Among these is mentioned the celebrated Abbey of Novalesa, in Piedmont. According to the testimony of Philibert Pingonio, a diligent investigator of ancient historical Archives,[1] this abbey was founded by the disciples of the Saint during his lifetime. Like Monte Cassino, it was destroyed by the Lombards about the year 575, and the monks, flying to Turin, took there a great treasure of manuscripts. It was afterwards restored in 576 and abandoned later on during the incursions of the Saracens; finally the monks returned there in 987, and, a short time after, it was united to the Congregation of Cluny. Another monastery, whilst St Benedict was still alive, was founded by his disciples in the city of Perugia, in which lived the monk St Herculanus, who afterwards became Bishop of the city, and was slain by the Goths. This is found in the *Acts* of his life, approved by Baronius and the Congregation of Sacred Rites.[2] The mention of these and other monasteries founded by St Benedict in Italy is sufficient to confirm what the Abbot of Fondi wrote to Simplicius, the Saint's successor.

The devastation of the monastery of Monte Cassino, which happened in the year 581 at the hands of the Lom-

[1] Reynerii, *Apostolatus Benedictinorum in Anglia*, 1626, p. 142.

[2] "Herculanus secundus hujus nominis Perusiae Episcopus, qui cum in coenobio ex S. Benedicti instituto Perusiae fundato, vitam monasticam magna cum laude duxisset, tandem ecclesiae Perusianae antistes est ordinatus."—Reynerii, *ib.*, 141; in S. Greg. *Dialog.*, lib. iii. cap. xiii.

bards, the flight of a great part of the monks to Rome, and the establishment of the Abbatial Seat near the Lateran Patriarchate, as Paul, the deacon [1] and the Cassinese chronicler Leo [2] relate, by a wonderful design of Providence, instead of injuring the work of St Benedict after his death, promoted its development. Simplicius, Constantine, Vitalis, and Bonitus held in succession, during forty years, the government of Monte Cassino. The last-mentioned began in Rome the series of Lateran Abbots; and the Cassinese, who, for a hundred and thirty years, found a refuge in the vicinity of the Abbey, when the Barbarians had retired, returned to their home, and became guardians of the sepulchre and the bones of their Founder.

6. It is easy to understand how, at the first news of the destruction of Monte Cassino, and of the arrival of the refugee monks who belonged to the order of Roman Patricians, all the city was in commotion. To see these first disciples of the Saint, who had lived with him, was to see their Master himself. All ran to the Lateran monastery, which was founded by the Saint; [3] all asked about his life and miracles; all were anxious to see and touch the small articles that belonged to him,—the weight determining the monk's daily portion of bread, and the autograph of the Rule. Amongst these was Gregory, the son of Gordianus, who was born in 540, and even in his infancy had learned something of St Benedict. Burning with the desire of virtue, he sought for and obtained a knowledge of St Benedict from the Cassinese Constantius, Valentinian, Simplicius, and from the Subiaco monk Honoratus; and when relating in his book of *Dialogues* what he had learned, whilst giving to other ascetics, of whom he speaks, scarcely a single chapter, he dedicates a whole book, the second, to the history of St Benedict. He reads his Rule, finds it marvellous for discretion and lucidity of language, and embraces it. If persons came from other monasteries to that of St Andrew,

[1] *De Gestis Longobardorum*, lib. iv. cap. xviii. [2] Lib. i. cap. ii.
[3] Reynerii, *Apostolatus Benedictinorum in Anglia*, p. 140.

which was built by him, and where he was a monk, we may believe that they either followed the Rule of St Benedict, or that they embraced it with St Gregory. He became a Roman Pontiff, and, with good right, has been proclaimed *Great* by History. With him St Benedict ascended for the first time the Chair of St Peter, and from that elevation God gave him power to see how, out of the cloud of contemplation in the Sacred Cave of Subiaco, there sprung forth the historical flower of Benedict's civil Apostolate in Europe.

7. On the day when there descended from the slope of the Cælian Mount forty monks, with Augustine at their head, sent by Gregory to convert England to the Faith of Christ, there commenced the history of what I have called the civilising course of St Benedict through Europe; and, at the distance of half a century from his death, more than ten thousand Anglo-Saxons, on the Christmas-day of 597, bowed their heads and received baptism from his sons in the waters of that river Thames, from which were to go forth the power and civilisation of an Empire more vast and more enduring than that of the Cæsars. The first Episcopal See in England was founded by Augustine at Canterbury, and he first occupied it; and in the suburbs of that city the first Benedictine monastery was built. And, as from the Cælian, Benedict went forth to convert Britain to the Christian faith, so from that monastery was spread through the whole Island his Rule, which gave a spirit to its ecclesiastical law and government. The churches of the smaller monasteries became parish churches, and those of the larger monasteries cathedrals; and thirty-eight monks succeeded Augustine on the See of Canterbury. It must be here remarked that, if any Catholic is unwilling to acknowledge, as sons of St Benedict, both Pope Gregory and those monks sent by him to convert the English, not only Mabillon,[1] and his brethren, in the Life prefixed to the works of that pontiff,[2] have claimed that honour for St Benedict, but also the most learned Protestant

[1] Acta SS. O.S.B.

[2] Lib. iii. cap. v., vi., vii.

writers, as Cotton, Spelman, Selden, and Cambden,[1] in the seventeenth century, who are quoted by the monk Clement Reyner, author of the *Apostolatus Benedictinorum in Anglia.*

8. Scarcely a century and a half had passed from the death of Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, when all the people of Great Britain were won over to the faith of Christ, and all, Britons and Saxons, were united together in subjection to the Holy See through the means of the monks of St Benedict. In England the Benedictine Order got blood and nerve from the strong race of the Anglo-Saxons, whose spirit, under the monastic habit, afterwards subjected to the faith and civilisation Germany and all the northern countries of Europe, by that moderation in proposal and perseverance in design which are yet admired in that Empire of the extreme East, in vain so ardently desired by Alexander the Great, and to-day ruled over and governed by a British Queen and Empress. What those Anglo-Saxon monks were like, and what they did in England, and what virtues sprung up in their hearts from the humble seed of the Evangelical Counsels scattered by the penitent of Subiaco on the holy mountain of Cassino, has been said, better than I can say it, by a French layman, quoting the opinion of Kemble (tom. ii. pp. 350, 358)[2]:—

"Far from flying from the society of other Christians, he says, they personified or created around them an entire Christian society. Far from paying attention only to the salvation of their own souls, they gave themselves unweariedly at first to the spiritual care of the infidels, and afterwards to preserving moral faith in the new Christian families which they had converted by their word. Far from giving themselves only to prayer and manual labour, they cultivated and propagated all the science and literature which the world, up to their times, possessed. The desert places, in which they at first assembled through love of solitude, were soon changed, as it were, by the force of

[1] Montalembert, *Les Moines d'Occident*, Vol. III., p. 423; Paris, 1868.
[2] *Ib.*, Vol. V., p. 157.

things into cathedrals, cities, rural and urban colonies, destined to be the centres of schools, libraries, workshops, and strongholds for the newly-converted families and tribes. Around these monastic cathedrals and principal monasteries, cities were soon formed which stand to this day, and in which were seen to spring up those municipal liberties, whose vital guarantees are yet bound up with the names of magistrates deputed to defend and use them. . . . All the bishops of England came forth from the monasteries; the monks formed exclusively the clergy of the cathedrals, where they lived a community life with the diocesan prelate at their head. In the course of a century they occupied the place of the secular and parochial clergy. The monasteries were the centres whence missionaries went forth to the rural stations in order to baptise, preach, and celebrate all the rites of worship, and they returned to them in order to refresh themselves in study and prayer.[1]

This was the work of St Benedict in England, and it was, as it were, the programme which Gregory II afterwards gave to Boniface, the most illustrious of the Anglo-Saxon monks, when going to convert Germany. Before his departure he was admonished by his brother in religion, Aldhelm, (both were *alumni* of the monastery of Malmesbury), to walk, whilst converting the infidels, in the footsteps of their elders, who triumphed over the Pagans, not by any earthly force, but by the moderation and gentleness of their spirit, "not insulting them," he wrote, "not exciting them to anger, but by meeting them with gentleness and moderation."[2] That he had afterwards to suffer death for Christ was owing, not to any use of harsh language, but to the excitable nature of the people he was evangelising. Hence Montalembert wrote: "We confess, once more, to the immortal glory of the monastic conquerors of England, that neither they nor their disciples nor their protectors used

[1] Montalembert, *Les Moines d'Occident*, Vol. V., p. 158; Paris, 1869.

[2] "Non quasi insultando vel irritando eos, sed placide et magna objicere moderatione debes."—Epist. 15, *inter Bonifacianas*, ed. Jaffé.

violence or persecution in the service of the Christian faith."[1] It was by this moderation, both in England and in Germany, that they became the masters of agriculture and industry,[2] and the fathers of social justice. "They alone," writes Kemble,[3] "had the right and the means to stay the rude hand of power, to soften the just rigours of the law, to make a ray of hope shine before the eyes of the slave, and to find, even in this world, shelter and bread for those abandoned ones whose existence the State ignored."

The Rule of St Benedict and its power were entirely Roman, the vigour of its civilising action throughout Europe was Germanic; and this was a splendid argument for the credibility of God in History. The Germans came into the countries of the Roman Empire with arms in their hands, as destroyers of Pagan civilisation; they returned clothed in the garb of monks, as the promoters of the civilisation of Christ. This fact, which has no explanation in the Philosophy of History, finds it in the Theology of Providence.

9. Henry VIII, Elizabeth, and Cromwell, let loose the terrible tempest of their Reform upon the monasteries of St Benedict; they drove away the monks, seized upon their goods, and committed their Abbeys to the flames, but they did not succeed in extinguishing in the hearts of their people the dear memory of St Benedict, who, without their seeing it, left an indelible impress on their civil institutions, on their Universities, and even on the Reformed clergy itself. From this is derived that love and devotion among the English towards the relics of monastic monuments, which is shown in the collecting, preserving, and publishing of the manuscript treasures of their libraries, and in restoring to life architecture and painting, especially in liturgical decorations, which once informed the æsthetic faith of their ancestors.

10. As then, the beloved memory of St Benedict yet continues in the heart of the British nation, I will cite the verses of St Aldhelm, a Benedictine monk of the seventh

[1] "*Les Moines d'Occident*," p. 153.
[2] Lingard, tom. i. p. 207.
[3] "Saxons in England," tom. ii. p. 375.

century, in praise of the Saint. He calls him, whose life and death Pope Gregory has described, the first teacher of the spiritual combat of life, the first legislator of monasteries, the first to point out to ascetics the most direct way to reach heaven's heights: he is the only Father of the monks that are in Britain's fertile bosom; from him has come to us the grace of baptism, and the host of venerable masters.[1]

Twelve centuries had passed from the time of Aldhelm, when, on the 6th of September, in the year 1847, another Englishman left these words written in the Archives of Monte Cassino: "O holy Cassinese, from whom our England formerly drew the salutary waters of Catholic doctrine, pray for us now awaking from heresy to pristine vigour." That Englishman was John Henry Newman, who died not long since a Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church. What an enduring memory and warm affection towards St Benedict these two sons of Old Albion had, living, as they did, so far distant from one another.[2]

11. The English people is brave, because it preserves all that which was once the principle of its faith in the supernatural order, and of its consciousness of those rights and duties which, tempered by the practical sentiment of justice, are the foundation of all its moral and political economy. It venerates that principle as a sacred thing; and

[1] "Primo qui statuit nostrae certamina vitae,
Qualiter optatam teneant Coenobia normam,
Quoque modo properet directo tramite sanctus
Ad superos scandens coelorum culmina cultor.
Cujus praeclaram pandens ab origine vitam
Gregorius praesul chartis descripserat olim,
Donec aethralem felix migraret in arcem.
Cujus alumnorum numero glomeramur ovantes,
Quot gerit in gremio foecunda Britannia cives:
A quo jam nobis Baptismi gratia fluxit,
Atque Magistrorum veneranda caterva cucurrit."
Acta SS. O.S.B., tom. i. praef. xlv.

[2] "O Sancti Montis Casinensis, unde Anglia nostra olim saluberrimos Catholicae doctrinae rivos hausit, orate pro nobis jam ex haeresi in pristinum vigorem exspergiscentibus." Sept. 6, 1847.—"J. H. NEWMAN."

even the symbols and forms which clothe it are respected with equal devotion; nor does it allow itself to be blown about by the wind of novelty, through the foolish desire of doing things which are not done by others.

It abhors extremes, because that traditional *cultus* tells it where and when it ought to pause in the progressive search after the True and the Good. Revolutions are certainly not indigenous in its soil. Times and men even in England have been guilty of devastation and ruin in certain hours of feverish delirium, but this was never the *delirium tremens* of the radicalism of other countries, which, for the worship of divine and social duty, substituted the cruel orgies of the *Goddess of Reason.* The Reform of Henry VIII. did not succeed in breaking the course of tradition, which had its roots in the historical fact that England was converted, nine centuries before, to the Faith of Jesus Christ by St Benedict; nor has religious revolution broken out into atheism. The idea of Christ and of the Church has remained alive; but the edifice of the Church, reformed by the Thirty-nine Articles, crumbled to pieces in its beginning, being destroyed by the multitude of sects, such as Methodists, Quakers, Anabaptists, and others, because the two foundations of perpetuity were wanting—viz., Faith and Love; the Divine Power of the Keys and the Holy Eucharist. Hence the reformed Englishman, thinking that he is journeying with Christ to the city of Emmaus, being nourished only on the bread of the *Supper*, has never come to know Him *in fractione panis.*

Faith without unity is only opinion; and the human spirit, to whose essence it belongs to think and comprehend, is not itself comprehended by any other than God revealing. In this contest between reason and human dogmatism, the English conscience always returned to the fountain of its religious traditions, to see the issue of their conflict with the Reform of Henry VIII.

The religious and political anathema banished Catholics from Church, Parliament, and Public Offices. But the tradi-

tion of the ancient Faith, at the head of which was St Benedict, not only brought them back to Parliament and Office, but had the power to build up again the ancient Catholic Hierarchy in their Church, and to win over to Rome the choicest spirits of the Reform, like Newman, Manning, Faber, Ripon, Bute, and many others.

A new harvest springs up in the field of the Church at the vernal breath of heavenly grace. The need of unity in Faith directs the minds of this powerful England towards a future of reconciliation and peace; for discord in supernatural things is a logical absurdity which cannot last.

I do not write these words as a rhetorical exercise. I direct them to my Brethren, the English Benedictines, in order that they may be on the watch. At an hour, when they think not, St Benedict will knock at their Abbey doors, to put in their hands that Cross which he came from the Cælian Mount to plant in England, in order that they may carry it back to the Vatican Hill in Rome, the centre of unity, as the standard-bearers of their entire country, which was once called the *Island of Saints.*

12. As Gregory the Great committed to Augustine the duty of converting the people of Britain to Christ, so did Gregory II depute Boniface, formerly called Winfrid, to the Apostolate of Germany. But it must be remarked that before this Pontiff, by his supreme authority, chose him for this office, the Anglo-Saxon monks, Chilian, Suitbert, Willibrord, and Wolfran, had come over from England to the continent, to bring the light of the Gospel to that Germanic nation, from which the torrent of Barbarians, called Goths, Vandals, Rugi, Heruli, and others, once rushed down upon the provinces of the Roman Empire. The spirit of St Benedict filled and transported them; the papal authority afterwards restrained and regulated their ministry in the foundation and government of their churches.

13. Among these missionaries towered Boniface, the greatest of them all. He, too, was an Anglo-Saxon, like other monks, Lullus, Burchard, and Willibald, and by his

zeal in preaching and by his martyrdom, has deservedly been called the Apostle of Germany.

Mabillon cites these words of Adam of Bremen[1] regarding Boniface: "He who first reclaimed the Northern regions of Germany from the worship of idols to the knowledge of the Divine Religion of Christ, was Winfrid, of the English nation, and a true Christian philosopher, who, on account of his virtue, was afterwards called Boniface. And although some writers state that before him others preached the Divine Word, such as Gall in Germany, Emmeramm in Bavaria, Chilian in Franconia, and Willibrord in Frisia, nevertheless he, like the apostle Paul, by his zeal and labours in preaching, surpassed them all."

That name of *Christian philosopher*, given to Boniface, shows that he had a twofold mission; one received from Gregory II, to open, by the preaching of the Gospel, the gates of what St Paul calls our *free city in Heaven;* the other was received from St Benedict, to found, in those barbarous regions, the civil municipality of the Germanic nations. Thus it was that Boniface and all the legion of holy monks whom he brought with him from England, each of whom was an apostle of some province of those northern countries, were missionaries of the Gospel, but, at the same time, also colonisers of savage lands, and civilisers of more savage peoples, and the builders of the Christian city on the foundation of the Gospel. Hence the preachers were not nomads, but stable legislators, and the monasteries, as Mabillon[2] well says, were like fortified citadels and places of refuge, and cradles of the nascent religion. From the monastery St Benedict enlightened with his spirit the fierce Germanic tribes, softened them down by the benefits of agriculture, attracted them into his churches by the poetry of Christian worship, placed before their eyes

[1] Praefatio in Acta SS. O. B., p. 92.

[2] "Coenobia non pauca aedificantes, quasi arces munitissimas, quae et sibi perfugia essent, et nascenti religioni incunabula." *Praefatio in saeculum* iii. Acta SS. O. S. B., p. 92.

the life of his monks; and, whilst, outside, the monastery, the seed of daily bread fell into the furrows of his plough, inside, there sprang up in the minds of the converted the blossoms of sound knowledge on authority, laws, justice, and social peace. The most famous among so many monasteries was that of Fulda, founded by Boniface in a place which was a *savage desert amidst a vast solitude*, as he himself writes in a letter to Pope Zachary.

14. And, as around this Abbey there arose the city of Fulda, so, wherever in Germany there arose a monastery, there sprang up at the same time cities, like Corbie and Bremen in Saxony, Salzburg, Frisia, Eichstadt, Episcopal cities in Bavaria, and St Gall in Switzerland.

The nomad German tribes, turning from plunder to the cultivation of the land, settled down, and there arose cottages, villages, and cities, and social life began to rotate, as it were, round the monasteries of St Benedict, as round a planet from which there shone forth the light of the Gospel Ideal.

The colonists, having become civilised by that regeneration in the Faith of Christ which they received through the labours and blood of the Benedictine missionaries, afterwards found in them the cultivators of their minds and hearts. Literary schools, whilst providing within the cloister for the education of youths brought to the monastery, were established also outside for the advantage of the people, and so excellent was the teaching there, that Kings themselves and Princes did not hesitate to confide to the monks the scientific training of their sons.[1] Then began the great Benedictine libraries of Germany, the true sanctuaries of History, in which the monks, the only chroniclers of their times and the preservers of the monuments of the past, gathered together so many historical treasures, which in later times came forth, under

[1] Mabillon, *Praefatio in saeculum* iii. p. 98: "Et quidem Regum filios quamplures in monasteriis nostris educatos legimus, Lotharium Caroli Calvi filium Antisiodori in Coenobio Sancti Germani, Theodoricum tertium Kalae: Ludovicum sextum, aliosque in monasterio Dionysiano; quibus adjungendi Pippinus Caroli Magni parens, et Rotbertus tertiae stirpis Rex secundus."

the light of criticism, to illustrate the life of the people of the Middle Ages. Those monks of St Boniface brought into Germany the traditions of their English monasteries, in which some monk, who was a learned and diligent writer, was appointed to note down the deeds of the King and others, and all that happened in the kingdom. These memoirs, after the king's death, were submitted for examination in the next General Chapter, and afterwards, being carefully arranged in the Chronicle, were preserved in the archives for the information of the people.[1] They were not only chroniclers of their times, but preservers of ancient history, hence the monastery of Corbie in Saxony had the glory of having handed down the first five books of the *Annals* of Cornelius Tacitus.

The Germanic nations having been regenerated by Christ, the monks were the first, and, for a long time, the only guardians of this Christian flock. The building of their churches, the ordination of their worship and ecclesiastical government, the institution of Episcopal Sees, like Frisingen, Ratisbon, Erfurt, Herbipolis, Eichstadt, and others, were, with the approval of the Pontiffs, entirely their work. They were, in the beginning, the parish priests, canons, and bishops,[2] so that the whole Church of Germany might be called Benedictine. Boniface was the

[1] Mabillon, *Praefatio in saeculum* iii. p. 101: "In posteriori studii genere (Historiae) illud memoria dignum, quod legitur in praefatione Matthaeo Parisio praefixa ex Scoti Chronico 'nimirum statutum fuisse in Anglia quondam, ut in unoquoque regali Monasterio unus aliquis designaretur scriba doctus ac diligens, qui Regis aliorumque facta ac Regni eventus notaret': quae, post Regis cujusque obitum, ad proximum generale Capitulum deferrentur examinanda, postea redigenda in Chronicon accurate in Archivio adservandum ad documentum posterorum."

[2] Mabillon, *ibi.*, p. 94: "Nihil vero magis honorificum magnificumque ad decus et honorem Ordinis nostri est, quam quod in ipso universarum Ecclesiarum capite, Romanis dico Ecclesiis primariis sodales nostri quondam sedem habuerunt nimirum in Lateranensi, in qua constituti Casinates Monachi post cladem Monasterio suo a Longobardis illatam, ubi etiam existebant tempore Innocentii Papae secundi, ut Baronius probat; et in ipsa Sancti Petri Ecclesia, jubente Gregorio tertio, monachi trium Ecclesiarum Romae vigilias celebrabant; ut interim sileam de Ecclesia Sancti Pauli, quae ab annorum longa serie Benedictinos habuit habetque ad nostram usque aetatem."

first Archbishop of Mayence, the head of many suffragan Bishops, and Primate of all Germany.

In a word, St Benedict made Germany Christian from being idolatrous, and he raised it out of barbarism into the state of civilisation ; he studded it with cities, churches, and cathedrals ; he enriched it with fertile fields, and the treasures of his libraries ; and leading it by the hand along the way of human progress, and guiding it to the lofty heights of science on which afterwards sat the sovereign masters of thought and erudition, generously unmindful of what it had done three centuries before to his Rome and his Italy, he blessed it, saying : *Prospere procede.*

15. Boniface, well understanding the greatness of his Apostolate in Germany, besides the colony of Anglo-Saxon monks whom he had prepared for the noble task, took with him also Benedictine nuns, who were educated in literature and art, in order that they might co-operate with the monks in civilising the barbarous nations. Among these were Chunihilt and her daughter Berathgit, deeply versed in the liberal sciences, and great lights in Thuringia ; and Lioba, Abbess of the convent of Bischofsheim, who aimed with such fervour at attaining the perfection of spiritual science, that, aided at the same time by reading and talent, and having the twofold advantage of natural aptitude and study, she became very learned. . . .[1]

These Anglo-Saxon nuns, true daughters of St Benedict, intent on labour, emulated the monks in the transcribing of manuscripts, which, with singular skill in caligraphy and miniature, they made beautiful both inside and out, and enriched with precious coverings, especially those destined for the Sacred Liturgy. We not unfrequently find, in the letters of St Boniface, that the monks entrusted this kind

[1] Mabillon, *ibi.*, p. 102 : " Lectionis studio tanta diligentia incumbebat, ut nisi orationi vacaret, nunquam divina pagina de manibus ejus abscederet. Nam cum ab ipsis infantiae rudimentis grammatica et reliquis liberalium artium studiis esset instituta, tanta meditationis instantia spiritualis scientiae perfectionem conabatur adsequi, ut consentiente cum ingenio lectione, duplicato naturae et industriae bono eruditissima redderetur."

of work to the nuns, and that the manuscripts were often written in gold letters on purple parchment. On account of their science and skill in such arts, they undertook to teach them in schools; and thus these brave women, by cultivating the minds of the people and helping them in the moral necessities of life, did what, in these times, is done, with such utility to the Church, by other societies of pious virgins.

16. In the eighth century, when the Germanic people were converted to the Faith, the Benedictine nuns were the only helpers of the missionary monks of the Roman Church, because there were no other societies of women to do it. If in later times we find them rigidly cloistered and contemplative, this does not mean that they have lived idly in the vineyard of the Lord.[1] As the souls of Benedict and his sister Scholastica were closely united by charity, and were companions in death and the glory of Heaven, so the nuns were sharers with the monks in the noble work of civilising men by the virtue of the Cross. The holy benefactors of humanity draw their vigour of counsel and will for great deeds, not from themselves, but from the Church, and the seed of the Evangelical Counsels, which the Church cast into the monasteries of men and of women, was the same. Wherefore if afterwards the monk was laborious, the nun was not idle, but was intent, through

[1] Down to the twelfth century we find that the Benedictine nuns of Polignano, in Puglia, gave themselves to charitable works among the poor orphans and the sick, as is seen in the *Chartularium Cupersanense*, in a "paper" of 1144 by the Marchese Manfredi, lord of Polignano, who gives five annual presents of wine to Agnes, Benedictine Abbess of the same city, *pro pauperum sustentatione et pro cura alendorum orphanorum quæ ibidem geritur.*

In another "paper" of 1171 there is mention of a hospital administered by Scholastica, Abbess of the same Benedictine monastery of Polignano, in Puglia.

The learned Domenico Morca, who is at present attending, at Monte Cassino, to the publication of the *Chartularium*, will render great service to the students of their country's history, the documents being very precious and for the most part unexamined, and commented by him with much erudition and critical skill. It is certain that much light will come from these documents when examined in reference to the chronology of the feudal possessions, the customs and topography of the Bari region.

the martyrdom of self-abnegation, in keeping alight, like *a prudent virgin*, the lamp of charity, without which the nun of St Boniface would not have been a *valiant woman.*

It is certain that, in course of time, the Benedictine nuns were no longer laborious like Lioba and Thecla ; but they were sufficiently so, in the eighth century, to show that there was in them the power to do, in the exercise of charity, all that is done by modern Institutes, which are sent to console sick humanity.

By these contemplative virgins was preserved, in the Church,

" . . . quel caldo
Che fa nascere i fiori e i frutti santi,"—[1]

and the flowers and the fruits come in their time.

If the cloisters of the daughters of St Benedict had not existed, Vincent of Paul would not have found the typical woman of his *Sisters of Charity.* St Benedict in the sixth century, St Vincent of Paul in the seventeenth,—the former had to do with the Barbarians, the latter with the Encyclopædist philosophers. Human reason with difficulty gives itself up to the block of Theological Syllogism : it is frequently besieged by, and surrenders itself to, the unexpected assaults of charity. The eloquence of Bossnet and Massillon, and the hysterical spiritualism of Port Royal, were overcome by disbelief in the supernatural, which was dragged down by the sarcasm of Voltaire. The *Sister of Charity*, who alone walked uncontaminated among the corruptions of those times with the little foundling in her arms ; who, in the hospitals and on the field of battle poured the balm of resignation to God's Will into the wounds of suffering humanity ; who received into her truly maternal bosom the breath of the agonising, was, and ever will be, the practical missionary of the Faith of Christ. The rationalist, who, in the impetuosity of sentiment, admired her virtue, not being able to find the source of it within the boundaries of nature,

[1] Dante, *Paradiso*, xxii. 47-48.

by an instinct of logic, and without wishing it, found himself face to face with that supernatural which he believed impossible. And I feel sure that the marvellousness of that virtue arose less from the effusion of her charity than from the steadfastness of her chastity: a divine virtue, which the dissenting Churches and the philanthropy of the rationalist have never been able to imitate. The Roman Catholic Church alone gives birth to *Sisters of Charity;* and this fact alone is sufficient to show that she alone is truly Apostolic.

17. This brief reference to England and to Germany, won over to Christ and civilisation by the sons of St Benedict, is enough to prove the historical thesis which I laid down in the Prologue of this book. But I cannot refrain from remarking here that the truth of the facts which I have touched upon is more emphatically stated by the enemies of the Church than by monastic writers. Laurent,[1] who is certainly not a Catholic nor one who extols monastic virtue, says: "Christianity elevated the Barbarians to civil life. Germany and the North of Europe are indebted to the missionaries and to the monks for their material and their intellectual culture." Philosophers and Protestants render this justice to the Church. "The monks," says Herder,[2] "are the benefactors of Europe; their peaceful abodes, in the midst of barbarous peoples, were schools of moral perfection, and their monastery bell sounded like a signal of hope in those stormy centuries." "The monks," adds a Protestant historian,[3] "have been something more than the benefactors of their age; all humanity has derived benefit from their labours. The cultivation of the deserts, the clearing of the forests, the draining of the marshes, are the least of their benefits; their whole life was a sacrifice, and in this was their power over barbarous nations."

And here it is well to call to mind that that great Collection of historical documents, under the title of *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, and which learned Germans,

[1] "Études sur l'histoire de l'humanité—Les Barbares et le Catholicisme," tom. v. p. 426. [2] Idem., xviii. 3. [3] Plank.

through Imperial munificence, continue to complete, ought to be regarded as a monument of their country's gratitude to St Benedict, because those documents are a copious harvest of monastic matters, whether on account of what they contain, or on account of the sources whence they are derived. George Pertz, when visiting Monte Cassino in the first years of the century now drawing to a close, confided the first idea of this work to a humble but laborious son of St Benedict, Octavius Fraja-Frangipane, who at that time had care of the Archives of the Abbey. And there, where the Chronicles of the Abbey had their foundation, and the Saxon Chronicle of Vitechind, and that of Richard of St Germanus, after severe criticism, were admitted amongst those documents, the project of Pertz also received encouragement and help from that learned Benedictine. I was anxious to record this in order to throw more light upon the Providential analogy existing between the Germanic race and the Order of St Benedict, which, having been once generated in the cultus of Faith, yet exists in that of History.

CHAPTER XI.

1. Peace to the bones of St Benedict—2. The Resurrection of Monte Cassino —3. The Future of his Order.

1. WHEN St Benedict departed this life, there were two supreme thoughts in his mind, which he took with him to Heaven, where every human desire rests in the vision of God,—the resurrection of his Order, and peace for his remains. It has been related a little above, how the devastation of his monastery by the Lombards was made known to him by Divine revelation, and how, not being heard by God, he was unable to avert the calamity, although he obtained the safety of his monks; and how, in fine, on this account he gave himself to unusual grief and lamentation. That sad fact was revealed to him with the consequences which would flow from it, the principal of which was that a report would be spread through France of the translation of his body to the monastery of Fleury, which the Fleury writers say happened in the seventh century when the Abbey was abandoned by the Cassinese who fled to the monastery of the Lateran. This report, suddenly spread about, obtained credit among many persons, who, according to the spirit of those times, were very prone to believe in such migrations of holy bodies; so that that of St Benedict, carried away into France, received a sudden liturgical consecration, both in the Gallic Church and elsewhere.

Whoever attentively considers the care which St Benedict, whilst yet living, took of his sepulchre, will easily see that its inviolability was a matter which he had very much at heart. He himself chose the place where his bones were to rest; he himself had the remains of his beloved sister Scholastica brought to Monte Cassino, and placed

in the sepulchre which he had prepared for himself; he himself, in fine, had it opened and wished to see it with his own eyes, as if to be certain that that was the place, and no other, where he should sleep with his Scholastica. What was the reason of this posthumous providence, I could not say; but it is certain that it was a special and holy one, which, having been confided to God in his fervent prayers, was not cast aside.

But, if I might be allowed a conjecture, I should say that his jealousy regarding his sepulchre could not be attributed to any ambition for human glory; but it was directed only to the honour of God and the good of souls. Monte Cassino, the Patriarchal Seat of his Order, the witness of his victory over Paganism, of his virtues and of his death, was to possess for ever the treasure of his remains, in order that from the spot, whence his Rule was sent forth and his civil Apostolate took its rise, there might come, as it were, by faith in his sepulchre, a silent, continuous admonition to his monks to be his true sons and to glorify God in the place where he wrought so many wonders. As he had been so powerful with God in healing the sick and raising the dead, it is not credible that he cannot now protect the resting-place of his remains.

I will not here touch upon the history of those contests for the possession of that treasure, because the peaceful aim of this book forbids me to rekindle those discords, in which it frequently happens that, through love for the body of St Benedict, his spirit is lost. Without injury, however, to the opinions of either party, I will let history speak, which, a slow revealer of truth, has, during the past century, added to the arguments already adduced in favour of the Cassinese a supreme opinion which dissipates every shadow of doubt.

About one hundred and thirty years had passed since the destruction of the monastery of Monte Cassino, when a citizen of Brescia, called Petronax, a man of great piety, came to Rome to venerate the tomb of the Apostles, and

to do homage to the Supreme Pastor of the Church, Gregory II. Whilst conversing with the Pope, who during the whole of his Pontificate had done much to restore the churches and monasteries destroyed by the Lombards, he turned his discourse to the ruined Abbey of Monte Cassino. The Pope, by a Divine inspiration, according to the chronicler Leo, began to exhort the Brescian to direct all his efforts to restoring it, a sign that he was not only pious, but powerful in human argument. He willingly received the papal commission, and went to Monte Cassino. We may be quite sure that his soul melted at the sight of those ruins and that solitude; but neither the ruins nor the solitude were so complete as to present no remnant of the work of St Benedict, for he found there, yet standing, the little church of St Martin, which he afterwards enlarged, as Leo tells us, and the tomb of St Benedict in the Oratory of St John, over which some anchorite monks were keeping guard. For, as I have said above, the Cassinese had not all fled to Rome at the time of the irruption of the Barbarians; but many, having concealed themselves in neighbouring places, soon returned to the ruined Abbey, and had remained there up to that time, with no Abbot presiding over them. One of these was that St Antoninus who, having escaped from the hands of the Lombards, lived and died in a solitary spot near the city of Sorrento, and is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology on the 14th of February. The authoritative Baronius[1] had no doubt on this point. "It is beyond doubt," he writes, "that from the destruction of the Monastery of Monte Cassino up to its restoration by Petronax, that place was never without monastic discipline, for there were never wanting servants of God who inhabited it as guardians of the tomb of St Benedict."

These monks, impressed by the virtues of Petronax, agreed to choose him for Abbot; and thus the interrupted series of Cassinese Abbots had a new beginning, and the ancient

[1] Anno. 716.

cenobitical discipline was restored. As soon as this fact became known, nobles and plebeians came in great numbers and took the monastic habit in that holy place, where Gregory III. had built up again the ruined walls, for, during the ten years of his pontificate, this Pope spent large sums on this great work. But there were three Lombard monks who especially deserved well in this matter,—Paldus and his two cousins Tasus and Tatus, who, fifteen years before, had founded with their patrimony the celebrated Abbey of St Vincent, at the three sources of the Volturno, and which afterwards they governed in succession as Abbots. I must add that, when Desiderius ascended the Lombard throne in 757, the monastery of Monte Cassino was so far rebuilt as to be able to receive back the monks of the Lateran, who returned under Pope Gregory III. Now there happened, at this time, a fact, which was unknown till the last century, when Muratori, for the first time, published a chronicle of the Abbey of Leno, which records it. It is a fact which regards the ardent desire of St Benedict to see his Cassinese Abbey built up again and flourishing, and to see the doubts, raised by the monks of Fleury regarding the existence of his body at Monte Cassino, put to rest.

The reader must know that the Lombards, from being ruthless destroyers of monasteries and churches, and infected with Arianism, became, in the beginning of the seventh century, and especially under the new King Adoloaldus and Queen Theodolinda, more refined and meek in their manners: indeed, they became specially devoted to God's service, building churches, convents and hospitals, and endowing them.[1] Hence it was that Desiderius, before he ascended the throne of the Lombards, built, in the territory of Brescia, in a place called Leno, a church dedicated to Our Divine Saviour, to Our Lady, and to the Archangel St Michael, who was the patron of his nation; and for this reason the image of this Archangel is impressed upon the coin of the Lombards and of the Duchies of Beneventum. Having

[1] Paulus Diac., lib. iv. cap. xiii.

become King, he added a monastery to the church, and wished it to be occupied by Benedictine monks.

After the year 759, he went to Beneventum to visit his son-in-law Arechis, duke of that city, and, when on his way to Rome, he called at Monte Cassino, and finding a large community in the Abbey, which Petronax of Brescia had restored, he begged of his successor, Optatus, that he would let him have a colony of his monks, with an Abbot, for his monastery of Leno. Optatus granted his request, and appointed eleven monks to go there with Ermoaldus at their head, who became the first Abbot of Leno. And in order to secure the good graces of that King, the Cassinese Abbot granted a further request, by letting him have a certain part of the body of St Benedict. I translate the account into the vernacular from the barbarous Latin of the anonymous Chronicle of Leno, which was given to the light by Muratori:[1] "Not long after the beginning of the reign (of Desiderius) and the foundation of this monastery (of Leno), with the help of God and of the aforesaid most excellent king (Desiderius), there was translated from the town of Cassino, to the city of Beneventum, a certain part of the body of the most blessed and excellent confessor Benedict, Abbot; and from the city of Rome the bodies of the blessed martyrs Vitalis and Martial, and were placed in the same holy monastery."

If a certain part of the body of St Benedict was translated by King Desiderius and the Cassinese, in the eighth century, to the new Abbey of Leno, there is no longer any doubt that that body, from the very day it was placed in the sepulchre which St Benedict himself, whilst yet living, prepared for it, remained, untouched by the Lombard invaders, at Monte Cassino, and that its supposed translation, which, according to the Fleury authorities,

[1] Antiq. Ital. Medii aevi. t. iv. col. 944: "Non longe post introitum regni (Desiderii) et inchoationem hujus Coenobii (Lenensis) Domino cooperante, et praenominato excellentissimo rege (Desiderio), translatum est a civitate Beneventum de Cassino castro quaedam corporis partem beatissimi atque excellentissimi confessoris Benedicti abbatis, et ab urbe Roma corpora beatorum martyrum Vitalis et Martialis, et in eodem sacrosanctum conditum est Coenobio. Praefuit, etc."

happened in the seventh century, was only a pious amplification of some relics of those sacred bones. If they had all been taken into France, King Desiderius would have gone to the Monastery of Fleury and not to Monte Cassino to beg a part of them. Hence the identifications of that sacred body, made a little later by Pope Zachary, by Alexander II. in the eleventh century, in the fifteenth and sixteenth, and finally in the seventeenth, by the Abbot Angelo Della Noce, which are considered fabulous by the French, are founded on an historical fact unknown till the time of Muratori, the first editor of the Chronicle of Leno. These pious amplifications, by which a relic was magnified into an entire holy body, and by which this duplicate body was found in two distinct churches, were not rare in the Middle Ages. But St Benedict did not wish that such a thing should be said of his bones. And although the revelation of the Chronicler of Leno was tardy, the conviction that St Benedict's body was at Monte Cassino was very ancient among all those who, free from the anger of contending parties, gave a judgment on the matter.[1] If there are yet persons who believe in the transmigration of St Benedict from Monte Cassino to Fleury, let them go to Fleury and venerate him, and they will have the merit of it: *sola fides sufficit.* We Italians will remain with him at Monte Cassino; faith does not suffice for us. We have wished also to have the testimony of history; we have it, and this is enough.

I must not pass over in silence, in order to confirm the account of the chronicler of Leno, that amongst all the writers of the history of Brescia, cited by Zachary, s. J., in his account of that Abbey,[1] there is mention made of the coming of the Abbot Petronax to Brescia in the year 739, when Appolinaris was bishop of the city, and of the arm of St Faustinus, Martyr, which was presented as a

[1] Cardinal Bartolini, of illustrious memory, wrote learnedly on this subject in his work, "Di S. Zaccaria Papa, Commentarii Storico-Critici," Ratisbona, 1879.

gift by the city and taken to Monte Cassino.[1] This was enclosed in a reliquary of very ancient silver, the work of Lombard times. Round the top part of it were these words :—

R. PETRONACIS
ABB. CAS. OPE. EX.
BR
IXIA CASINVM DEVE
NI

and on the lower part

S. FAVSTINVS MARTYR.

This precious relic, which had been saved from the hands of the Saracens, and was universally venerated,[2] fell into the hands of other barbarians when the Abbey of Monte Cassino was sacked at the beginning of this century. The gift of this relic was reciprocated by Petronax with the bones of the arm of St Benedict, which were also enclosed in a silver reliquary of Lombard workmanship.

There was a solemn recognition of this remarkable relic made in the year 1475 by the canons of the Cathedral of Brescia and by the deputies of the same city, and it was registered in the document which is found in the parchment register of the public archives of that time.[3]

[1] Leo, *Chron. Casin.*, lib. i. c. 4. Joannis Monachi Chronicon Vulturnense —R. I. S., tom. i. par. 2*a*., p. 351. "Hoc tempore idem Petronax beati Faustini brachium secum detulerat."

Petronax, according to Leo, enlarged by sixteen cubits the Church of S. Martin at Monte Cassino, and put up an altar in it to SS. Faustinus and Jovita, in which the arm of Faustinus is placed.

[2] Amongst those who venerated it I will mention Gradenigo in his *Brixia sacra*, p. 101. He thus writes :—"Hoc sacrum cimelium ipsi venerati sumus in Montis Casini sacrario, ubi cum pene innumeris ejusmodi sacris exsuviis custoditur in vetustissima theca argentea, opere, ut videtur, longobardico, his circumductis litteris.—*R. Petronacis Abbatis Casinensis ope ex Brixia Casinum deveni.—S. Faustinus Martyr.*"

And Zachary (Dell'Antichissima badia di Leno), lib. i. p. 8, writes :—"That arm is yet preserved at Monte Cassino, and we reverently kissed it whilst, in 1759, we were most kindly entertained for some days by the monks of that royal monastery. The silver reliquary is very ancient, and shows by its workmanship that it is from Lombard times; round the top part these words are seen" (*i.e.*, those above cited).

[3] Register marked p. 150, line 15.

The reliquary was of silver of the shape of an arm, like that of St Faustinus taken to Monte Cassino, and contained two bones bound with yellow and blue silk string, and folded up in a linen cloth, with these words on it; *Brachium S. Benedicti*.[1] This not less precious treasure was also destroyed in 1870 through the indiscreet design of one who wished to take out the contents at the restoration of the Church! This remarkable relic was translated in the seventeenth century from the cathedral of Brescia to the abbey of SS. Faustinus and Jovita, occupied by Benedictines of the Cassinese Congregation, at the request of their Abbot, D. Orazio Barbisoni, and placed in a rich chapel which he had constructed.[2] It remained there until this monastery was suppressed by the French.

Many years afterwards the monks of Monte Cassino, who were about to celebrate in 1880 the Centenary of the birth of St Benedict, sent a deputy to Brescia to request that the two bones of the arm of the Saint should be restored to them, in order that they might be preserved in the same place where the rest of the body was venerated. Of the two bones, the smaller one only was given back, and through the munificence of His Eminence Cardinal Bartolini, protector of the Benedictine Cassinese Congregation, a beautiful reliquary was prepared for it, in which it is preserved in the Basilica of Monte Cassino. It is impossible to say how grateful the monks of St Benedict will always feel to the illustrious city of Brescia for this last proof, as it were, of its kindness to-

[1] Note how the same thing is narrated by Giuseppe Brunati in his work, *Vita e gesta di Santi Bresciani*, tomo ii. p. 233:

"The same relic (of St Benedict), with its gemmed silver reliquary in the form of an arm, has been noticed and described in the act of recognition made on the 9th day of February 1475, preserved in the parchment Register A of the principal archives of Brescia, entitled *Privilegi T. I. f.* 150. *Brachium Sancti Benedicti.* We read there: "in argento ad formam brachii. . . . Ossa duo in serico ligata erocei coloris et azurini et involuta etiam in panno lineo, cum certis aliis fragmentis reliquiarum in eadem forma brachii et manus, cui inscriptum in fundo: Brachium Sancti Benedicti."

An inscription of this kind is, in fact, always found engraved on the circular silver plate forming the lower part of such an arm.

[2] See Appendix F.

wards the Abbey of Monte Cassino. The Brescian Petronax restored this abbey from its ruins to new life, and the humble chronicler of the Brescian monastery of Leno furnished the most precious document to confirm the truth that St Benedict's bones were at Monte Cassino. The two supreme desires of the Saint were satisfied by the charity of generous Brescia. To him it belongs to repay that charity, and he knows how.

I have written thus regarding the arm of St Benedict, given by the Cassinese to the Brescians, not in order to kindle afresh contests amongst his sons, but in order to show how there may still be discussion about the translation of the body of St Benedict from Monte Cassino to Fleury, but that this must be confined to the quantity of relics given in the seventh century to the monks of Fleury by the custodians of the Saint's sepulchre. Solemn testimony was given on this matter by that illustrious Benedictine monk, D. Prosper Guéranger, a Frenchman, who, to the merit of learning and piety, added that of having restored the Benedictine Order in his native country after the revolution of the last century. In the preface to his *Enchiridion Benedictinum*,[1] after having affirmed that there were bones of St Benedict in the tomb at Fleury, soon remembering[2] the hymn which is sung every day by the Cassinese before the sepulchre of St Benedict, he says that *that hymn ought to be cherished as most holy by all the sons of that Saint, sung, as it is, every day on the Holy Mountain at the foot of the sepulchre in which a part of his awful bones reposes.* If, then, the reader would wish to know how great is the part of those bones which yet remains at Monte Cassino, I must tell him that if, after the French translation of the other part to Fleury, in the eighth century, an entire arm of St Benedict was given away by Petronax, we must conclude that the part remaining is the greater, not to say, indeed, the entire body.

But for what reason, some one will say to the Cassinese, do you not publicly expose this treasure of the body of St

[1] Angers, 1862, p. xv. [2] Ench. Ben. p. 22.

Benedict, of which you regard yourselves as the possessors? Why do you not let it be seen, touched, and kissed in reverence? And I answer: for the same reason that the bodies of SS. Peter and Paul are kept hidden. The reason is very simple,—because even the bones of the Saints have their modesty. Through these bones, which Guéranger calls *awful*, the demolished Abbey of Monte Cassino quickly sprung up into vigour, so that in only thirty-three years, during which the venerable Petronax governed it, it regained the splendour in which St Benedict had left it. Faith in the existence of his body stirred up a pilgrimage from every part of the world to go and venerate it within its walls.

2. So great was the number of those who embraced the monastic state at Monte Cassino under the Abbot Petronax, and so great was the vigour of regular discipline which flourished there, that it seemed as if that community was guided to the summit of perfection by St Benedict himself again living on earth. There were men of every race there —Romans, Lombards, Greeks—and these were so numerous that the Abbot was able to establish an annual Greek and Latin liturgical function at the altar of St Benedict in the sanctuary of the Tower.[1] So great was the fame of the sanctity of those monks[2] that at that time Ratchis, King of the Lombards, and Carloman, brother of Pepin, King of the Franks, came to Monte Cassino to put on the habit of St Benedict; and Tasia, wife of the Lombard king, and her daughter Ratruda, became nuns, raising up from its ruins the monastery of St Scholastica, in the territory of Piumarola. And as if St Benedict had returned to life to occupy the Abbatial chair of Monte Cassino, the most illustrious monks were attracted there, as to a centre of unity, and the temple of monastic discipline. Then it was that Anglo-Saxon monachism, personated by Boniface, the Apostle

[1] ". . . in ipsa turre omni anno in sancti Benedicti altari faciebant officium Graeci et Latini."—(Codice 353; Gattula, *Histor. Casin.*, tom. i. p. 16).

[2] See Appendix E.

of Germany, animated by the belief that St Benedict yet lived on Monte Cassino, and through reverence for his sepulchre, went there to learn the teachings of monastic life at the very fountain-head. There Boniface sent his disciple Sturmio,[1] who afterwards became Abbot of Fulda, in order that, in the monastery founded by the Father Benedict, as Rodolf, a monk of Fulda, says, he might learn regular discipline, monastic life and customs, that the future Abbot might become a disciple, and in obedience learn how he ought to preside over others.

St Willebald, also an Englishman, led a monastic life for ten years at Monte Cassino, under the Abbot Petronax ; and he would have remained there till his death, had not Pope Gregory III. sent him into Germany to assist St Boniface in his apostolic labours. He afterwards converted many nations to the Faith, and died first Bishop of the See of Eichstadt in Saxony.

Not long afterwards the famous Paul the Deacon made his monastic profession in the same monastery, and opened there a school of arts and sciences, which flourished very much, so that Stephen, Bishop of Naples, sent his clerics there to learn them under his teaching.[2]

This study of monastic discipline existed not only in the Abbey of Monte Cassino, but was diffused also through other monasteries, as in France by means of Charlemagne, in Hungary by the holy King Stephen, in Germany by Willebald and Sturmio, and in Sardinia by Barasone the Governor.

" As," says Mabillon, " in the times of the Holy Father Benedict, the monastery of Monte Cassino was the school and the palestra of the Roman nobility, so, after its restoration under Petronax, it became the abode of princes

[1] " . . . Misitque in Casinum montem Sturmium discipulum suum, virum genere, et more nobilem, ut in monasterio, quod B. Pater Benedictus instituit, disciplinam regularem, et vitam moresque monasticos agnosceret, pastorque futurus discipulus fieret, atque in subjectione disceret, quomodo aliis præesse debuisset."—Gattula, *Hist. Casin.*, t. i. p. 16.

[2] Johannes Diac., " Chron. Episc. Nep. Eccl. S. R. I.," t. i., Part I., p. 310.

and kings, and a convenient refuge from the storms of the world."[1]

"It is wonderful to say," writes Baronius,[2] "how many young shoots of monks were quickly propagated in that place from the new plantation of Petronax, and how the numbers of monks multiplied like bees, which, going forth from their swarming hives into other parts, endeavour to propagate their offspring. But what can be asserted with certainty, and without fear of falsehood, is this, that there never was in the whole Christian world a monastery from which so many men, remarkable for their sanctity and learning, went forth to take upon themselves the government of the Holy Apostolic See, so that it might, at one time, be called the Seminary of Holy Bishops."

3. The bones of St Benedict having been again laid to peaceful rest, in the very spot where he himself wished to lie, and his Monte Cassino having been restored to the splendours of a second life, I cannot take leave of him without asking if he is to sleep for ever in the catacombs of a past which never returns; or will he, in renewed youth, like the eagle of the Bible, again precede the steps of the Church as she marches into the future, to dispense her benefits among the social family? Unskilled, because a monk, in the science of political astrology, I cannot foresee the future of humanity. I have sometimes, however, listened at my cell-door to gain some reason for conjecture from the present. But nothing has come to me from without, save the voices of the

[1] Saec. iii., Part II., p. 123: "Casinense monasterium ut tempore Patris Benedicti Romanae nobilitatis schola et palestra fuerat, sic post nstaurationem a Petronace factam, principum, ipsorumque regum diversorium evasit, et opportunum a saeculi turbinibus asylum."

[2] Mirum, dictu, quanta mox ex nova plantatione Petronacis fuerint propagata eo in loco germina Monachorum, et aucta ipsorum examina, instar apum, quae ex turgentibus alveariis prodeuntes, in diversa loca ad foetus multiplicationem volaverint, sed illud securi absque trepidatione mendacii asseri jure potest, nullum umquam in toto Christiano orbe extitisse aliquando monasterium, ex quo tot viri sanctitate conspicui, atque doctrina, tanta numerositate ad regimen Sanctae Apostolicae sedis adsciti fuerint, ut plane dici possit fuisse idem aliquando Seminarium Sacrorum Antistitum.—Ad Ann., 716.

multitudes. Sounds are not words, and I have learned nothing.

In the year 1880, there was celebrated at Monte Cassino, the fourteenth centennial anniversary of St Benedict's birth, and the Sanctuary of the Tower, which the Saint inhabited, was solemnly consecrated. The liturgical grandeur of this festive commemoration was equal to that of the famous consecrations of the Cassinese Basilica, performed by Pope Zachary in the eighth century, by Alexander II. in the eleventh, and by Benedict XIII. at the beginning of the last century. In that assemblage of Cardinals, Bishops, and Abbots, there was no Pope. But the spirit of the Supreme Pontiff, Leo XIII., travelled invisibly from Rome to Monte Cassino. He exulted, he blessed, he prayed on the tomb of St Benedict. At that moment a heavenly illumination came into his mind, and there fell into it from the hands of God, the seed of an idea that soon developed into a plan, which perhaps will not be the last of the glories of his Pontificate.

He has wished that a Benedictine College should be founded in Rome, under the patronage of St Anselm, in order that the young forces of the Order of St Benedict may be gathered there, and equipped for the battles of the Lord with the armour of charity and science. He deputed, to carry out his wishes, His Eminence Cardinal Dusmet, a Benedictine both by profession and heart. The Benedictine Order will never be able to acknowledge, with sufficient gratitude, the nobleness of the proposal and the munificence with which the design is being carried out. But history always supplements the impotence of man; and it has already placed Leo XIII. in that bright galaxy of Gregory the Great, Gregory II., Zachary, Alexander II., Urban V., and Eugenius IV., who have done so much for St Benedict. Thus, what I failed to hear, as I listened at my cell-door, I have learned from above. St Benedict yet traverses the world, *pertransiens benefaciendo.*

APPENDIX.

A.

VERSES BY THE MONK-POET, MARK, IN HONOUR OF ST BENEDICT.

CAECA prophanatas coleret dum turba figuras,
Et manibus factos crederet esse Deos ;
Templa ruinosis hic olim struxerat aris,
Queis dabat obscoeno sacra cruenta Jovi.
Sed jussus veniens, heremoque vocatus ab alta
Purgavit sanctus hanc Benedictus humum.
Sculptaque confractis dejecit marmora signis
Et templum vivo praebuit esse Deo.
Huc properat coelos optat qui cernere apertos,
Nec removet votum semita dura pium.
Semper difficili quaeruntur summa labore,
Arctam semper habet vita beata viam.
Hunc ego cum scelerum depressus fasce subissem,
Depositum sensi pondus abesse mihi.
Credo quod et foelix vita fruar insuper illa,
Oras pro Marco si, Benedicte, tuo.
Hunc plebs stulta locum quondam vocitaverat arcem
Marmoeisque sacrum fecerat esse Deis.
Quod tunc si vero signasset nomine quisquam,
Tartareum potuit jure vocare chaos.
Ad quem caecatis errantes mentibus ibant
Improba mortifero reddere vota Jovi.
Sed puto praevisae culmen signaverat aulae
Nomine tunc Arcis templa moderna vocans :
In quibus aeternae damnatur porta gehennae
Arxque modo vitae est, quae fuit ante necis.
De qua stelligeri pulsatur janua coeli
Dum canit angelicis turba beata modis.
De qua conloqueris vero, Benedicte, Tonanti,
Monticola, et sacri dux heremita chori.
Ad quam tu ex alio monitus cum monte venires
Per deserta tibi Dux, Via Christus erat.
Namque duos Juvenes bivium produxit ad omne

Qui te firmarent quod sequereris iter.
Hic quoque viventi justo praedixerat uni :
His tu parce locis, alter amicus adest.
Se sibi sublato tenebris mons coelitus horret,
Et pallet nebulis concolor ipse suis.
Moerent, et largis distillant fletibus antra,
Cumque suis plangunt tabida lustra feris.
Teque lacus liquidi vero flevere dolore
Et sparsit laceras silva soluta comas.
Credar ficta loqui, nisi te, ne solus abires,
Tres subito corvi promeruere sequi.
Hic quoque te clausum populi, te teste requirunt,
Expectas noctis, cum pia festa sacrae.
Qui velut orbati raucis tibi flere querelis
Instant convictu, quod caruere tuo.
Ast huc perducto scopuli cessere, rubique,
Siccaque mirandas terra retexit aquas.
Certum est mons Christi, quod montibus imperet ipsis,
Subjecit pedibus mons caput ecce tuis.
Utque suum tu sancte super vegetere cacumen
Summisso tumidam vertice planat humum.
Neve fatigentur qui te, Benedicte, requirunt,
Molliter obliquum flectit ubique latus.
Hunc mons ipse tamen juste tibi reddit honorem
Qui meruit tantum, te decorante, bonum.
Arida tu cujus hortis componis amoenis
Nudaque foecundo palmite, saxa tegis.
Mirantur scopuli fruges, et non sua poma
Pomiferisque viret silva soluta comis.
Sic hominum steriles in fructum dirigis actus,
Sicca salutari flumina corda rigans.
Sic rogo nunc spinas in frugem verte malignas
Quae lacerant Marci pectora bruta tui.

B.

Note by Macarty, the Cassinese, on the Antiquity of Cassino.

(Chron. Sublac, Mirtii, p. 720.)

. . . Tametsi bene Mirtius *Casinenses* unico sibilo, non *Cassinenses* duplici scribat ; nichilominus hac voce, qua Congregationis nostrae monachi indiscriminatim veniunt, non recte utitur ad Montis Casini

coenobitas designandos, qui dicendi sunt *Casinates*. Ita enim aetatum aureae et argenteae inscriptiones appellant cives et incolas antiquissimi Casini, quod Oscorum primo, tum Volscorum oppidum, ad Sabinos deinde, perque eos ad Samnites, demum ad Romanos derivatum, in excelsi cacuminis montis latere, inter orientem aestivum et meridiem, ad extrema novi Latii situm est, agro irriguo, amplo, amoeno, feraci in primis frumenti, frugi, quoque, ac fructu, omnigenisque oleribus divite. Laudibus prosequuntur: Tullius, *Orat. contra Rullum*, *de Lege agrar.*; Silius Italicus, lib. 12, *de Bello punico*; Macrobius, in *Saturnalibus*, lib. 3, cap. 16; Varro, praeterea, Livius, Plinius, qui *Natural. historia*, lib. 2, cap. 3, aquarum eius scatebras aestate praegelidas uberioresque miratur. Colonia eo deducenda senatusconsulto statuitur. L. Papirio Cursore, et C. Junio iterum Coss. nimirum anno Urbis conditae 441; nec Municipii honore caruisse innuunt lapis *Quinc. in Municipio. suo. Casini*, apud Cluverium, lib. 3, cap. 8, et Cullius, *Orat.* 31 *pro Gneo Planco*, quod fortasse contigit, cum confecto bello sociali, romana civitas Italicis populis data est, Coss. L. Cornelio Cinna, et Gn. Octavio; teste L. Floro, *Histor.* cap. 79. Inde Casinum aedificiorum magnitudine crevit, eiusque frequentissimi cives in varias tribus, Terentinam, Stellatinam, Palatinam censiti, nobilitate, divitiis, publicisque muneribus insignes evasere. Namque Vmmidius ex Varrone, lib. 3, *de Re rust.*, cap. 3, romanos consules, supremos scilicet imperii moderatores, domi suae excipiebat quam liberalissime; L. Rubrius, et ipse Casinas, M. Antonium romanorum facile principem, Tullii Philippicis, exagitatum, haeredem fecit: Vmmidius alter, Caii filius, cognomento Darmius Quadratus amplissimum quaestorium munus Romae cum dedisset, ibidemque aedilis Curulis, praetor aerarii, Xvir, litibus iudicandis XVvir, sacris faciundis, curator publicarum tabularum, praefectus frumenti dandi fuisset, consulatus deinde honore functus, primo Cyprum proconsul, postmodum Tiberii Claudii Neronis legatus, Lusitaniam, Illyrium, Syriam propraetor summa cum sui laude gessit. Tres etiam eius posteri romano consulatu annis domini CV, CXLII, CLXVII, inito, hodieque in Fastis Consularibus splendescunt, nempe C. Antius Julius, L. Statius, ac Titus; ex quibus priorem Γάϊον Ἄντιον Ἰούλιον Αὐλοῦ υἱόν Κουάδρατον δὶς ὕπατον, Ἀνθύπατον Ἀσίας idest Caium Antium Julium, Auli Filium, Quadratum, bis consulem, proconsulem Asiae, vocat graeca inscriptio Atheniensis apud clarissimum Sponium. Nec minus enituit praefati Hummidii Durmii Quadrati Syriae praesidis filia Vmmidia Quadratilla epistolis iunioris Plinii laudatissima femina; quae regia pene liberalitate Casinatibus suis extruxit templum ordine hetrusco, lapidibus mirae magnitudinis, nullo caemento, ut Romanum Marci Agrippae ordine Corinthio Pantheon, sed proportione tantummodo coeuntibus. Amphiteatrum peripheriae palmorum MXII, portas habens quinque palmis XXXII sublimes, latas XVI, Theatrum reticulati operis, magna ex parte dirutum, cuius tamen quae adhuc extant rudera, palmis CCCL excurrunt.

Temporum obluctata iniuriis haec aedificia supersunt adhuc, inter Hydrothecarum, aquaeductuum, aliarumque magnarum substructionum parietinas, primaevi splendoris Casini testes fidissimos. Caetera vel penitus excisa iacent, vel gramine ruderibusque obducta delitescunt, cuiusmodi sunt M. Terentii Varronis villa, memorata Ciceronis Philippica II. admirandum scilicet studiorum, ac rusticationum illius diversorium, romana magnificentia olim exurgens, silva manu consita, celsis vernans arboribus, piscinae plures, porticibus et marmoreis circumornatae culumnis, musaeum selectissimis codicibus, quamvis etiam re antiquaria refertissimum ; Tolus culumnatus ultra piscinas eminens, sub quo Stella Lucifer interdiu noctu Hesperus ad infimum usque hemisphaerium circumeundo, tempora indicabant ; magna turris octagona, totidem ventis, Euro, Apeliote, Caecia, Borea, Zephiro, Scirone, Noto, Africo, specie alati hominis emblemate multiplici redimiti, opere anaglyptico in angulorum orbe affabre caelatis, desuper vero aereus Triton ventum flantem virga innuebat, ad exemplar horologii urbis Athenarum, quod inibi Andronicus Cyrrestes pridem excitarat ; Ornithon, seu Aviarium, quod ut ipse Varro scribit lib. 3, *de Re rustica*, cap. 5, venustate, ac elegantia putabatur longe vicisse ἀρχέλυττον Brundusinum M. Lenii Strabonis et ὀρνιθοτροφεῖον Tusculanum M. Luculli.

C.

Note by Troya on the Donation of Tertullus to St Benedict.

(Codice diplomatico longobardo, tomo iv. p. 318.)

Chi mai potrà darsi a credere che S. Benedetto conquistò armata mano i gioghi del Cassino? Chi saprà mai negare, che gli spazi, ove fabbricossi la Badia, furongli donati da qualcuno verso il 531? E però, se il donatore si chiamasse Tertullo o con altro nome, poco importa, ma come resistere all' antichissima tradizione, che chiamollo sempre Tertullo?

La stessa tradizione affermava, d' avere il patrizio Tertullo fatto grandissimi doni a S. Benedetto in Sicilia. Rocco Pirro ed altri scrittori di quell insola non vogliono punto dubitarne. La dotazione originale si perdè miseramente, quando il feroce Zotone sopraggiunse a Montecassino, e diè alle fiamme la Badia. I monaci che fuggirono in Roma, e vi dimorarono per circa un secolo e mezzo non cessavano di rimpiangere il loro stato primiero, e necessariamente i doni di Tertullo in Sicilia s' andarono di bocca in bocca esagerando. La poesia non tardò ad introdursi nelle menti accrescendo i rumori delle straordinarie liberalità del patrizio. Nel 748 tutto s' era mutato. I Longobardi stavano in luogo de'

Goti, sotto i quali visse rispettato sempre S. Benedetto, e la Sicilia era divisa del tutto dall' Italia. I monaci che tornavano di Roma in Montecassino alla chiamata di Petronace venivano in povero arnese a veder la sede tenuta da' loro predecessori antichi, e Petronace non aspirava certamente a riaver le terre donate da Tertullo in Sicilia. Ma ei non volle nuocere ai dritti eventuali della sua Badia, e, non avendo piu in sua balìa la donazione, parlonne al Papa Zaccaria, secondo i dettati tradizionali. Allora il Pontefice, a cui l'empio Copronimo non avrebbe obbedito se non in quanto Zaccaria si fosse chiarito inimico delle Sacre Immagini, vietava i commerci de Palermo e di Messina col ducato di Benevento.

Vano scherzo di frivolo intelletto fu ne' secoli seguenti l' impegno di voler' fondare una donazione da capo ; vano sforzo, nè dissimile a quel di finger per ozio e per diletto le due Lettere di Vitaliano Papa, e le due del Codice Cavense, da me dianzi recordate. Chi altri se non un qualche scolaro, il quale voleva farla da leggiadro e mostrarsi erudito, accumular poteva tante assurdità, dicendo che Tertullo era patrizio per la grazia di Dio e che egli faceva noto ai consoli, ai patrizi, ai dittatori, ai proconsoli, ai prefetti, ai tribuni, ai centurioni, ai decurioni, e a tutti gli uomini per tutta la terra, che egli donato aveva immense possessioni a S. Benedetto?

Chi avrebbe in queste parole riconosciuto Tertullo, il vero donatore? Per tuttavia una si stolta scrittura pubblicata dal Vicentino, ebbe gli onori dell incisione sul marmo. Il Mazzocchi la riferì e da lui presela il Grutero, che l' annoverò tra le spurie, ansi tra le più dolorose che la mente umana potesse concepire. Nondimeno giova ripeterlo, vi fu, e non poteva non esservi una vera donazione di Tertullo in quanto al Monte di Cassino. In quanto alla Sicilia, se veramente se donarono terre a S. Benedetto nel 531, Petronace non pretendeva nel 748 riprenderle dalle mani degli occupatori.

La donazione, di che Petronace fè motto al Pontefice Zaccaria, e che trovasi accennata nella Bolla, è assai più verisimile dell' altra incisa in sul marmo. Io non crederò mai che si fosse fatto a S. Benedetto, e che S. Benedetto avesse accettato il dono di settemila servi ; ma certamente furonvi alcuni coloni e servi ne' poderi donatigli, de' quali s' accrebbe il numero dopo la sua morte. Di mano in mano si moltiplicarono i coloni ed i servi delle Badie benedettine in tutta l' Europa.

Il poliptico d' Irminone c' insegna, che nel 787 diecimila e più servi appartenevano a quello di S. Germano de' Prati a Parigi, e mille seicento quarantasei Monti e Poderi ; e però assai più folto doveva riuscir lo stuolo di que' servi tributari, essendo appena una quarta parte pervenuta del poliptico alla posterità. Nulla percio d' incredibile, seguitando i concetti dell' ottavo secolo, v' era nella legione de' settemila servi donati, o no, da Tertullo ; e Petronace potè prestar fede alle tradizioni, che avevano dovuto naturalmente ingrandir la notizia d' una donazione, onde s' era smarrito l' originale, d' una donazione di cui lo stesso Petronace

non isperava d' aver giammai a conseguire gli effetti nella Sicilia, vessata dal Greco iconoclasta.

Tolti di mezzo i settemila, non rimangono se non i porti di Messina e di Palermo, i quali sembrono aver dell' impossibile. Ma non si tratta de' porti da guerra o de' navali di quelle due città ; si trattava di qualche seno o piccolo golfo del mare od anche d' un fiume, che s' insinuasse nelle terre largite da Tertullo a S. Benedetto ; porti simili a quello di Volturno e di Traetto, donati da Gisulfo II. a Petronace. Leone Ostiense parlò delle diciotto Corti di Tertullo in Sicilia, ma non mai de' settemila servi.

Ciò prova il buon giudizio e la sincerità di quel cronista ; pure il suo silenzio non deve far sospettare, che o Petronace fosse un impostore o che si dovesse accusar di falso la Bolla di Zaccaria. Se Petronace potea nel 748 credere alla verità di quel dono, ben potea l'Ostiense in sul terminare del secolo undecimo, giudicare inutile di favellarne. Io non so se Petronace fu troppo credulo allora ; ma so, che egli non volle recare offesa nè far frode a niuno ; e ripeto che niuno de' suoi successori sperò giammai di recuperare i settemila servi, a malgrado delle rimembranze che se ne conservarono cosi nella Bolla di Zaccaria come in altre de Pontefici romani.

Il Monastero di Plumbariola, oggi Piumarola, vicino a Montecassino, mi sembra essere stato un dono di Tertullo a S. Benedetto. Antica ed animosa controversia s' agitò per sapere se ivi abitato avesse la sorella Santa Scolastica, e costruitovi un monastero di vergini. Appena io so concepire, che ciò possa negarsi ; ma se altri lo nega, la prossimità di Piumarola e di Montecassino mi fa comprendere, che non vuole staccarsi l'uno dall' altro dono ; e che però procedettero entrambi da Tertullo, non da Gisulfo II., il quale diè a Petronace *montana planiora in circuitu.*

Nel 750 la regina Tasia, moglie di Rachis, vi si riparò con la figliuola. Narra l'Ostiense che esse vi costruirono (*extruxerunt*) con regia liberalità il monastero, ciò che in apparenza contradice alla precedente Bolla di Zaccaria. L' antico monastero di Piumarola dovè, insieme con la Badia di Montecassino, essere disfatto da Zotone ; giacea perciò rovinato nel 748 ma non per questo dovea Petronace tacerne, senza pregare che nella Bolla se ne facesse menzione. Due anni appresso venne la Regina, ed edificovvene uno più splendido ; il che basta per togliere qualunque contraddizzione fra la Bolla e Leone Marsicano, e per dileguare ogni dubbio intorno all' esservi stato già nel 748 il monastero di Piumarola, sul quale s' innalzò l' altro più magnifico nel 750.

D.

Letter of the Abbot of Monte Cassino on the Centenary of St Francis.

In nomine Domini Dei aeterni ac Salvatoris nostri Jhesu Christi, anno ab incarnatione eius MDCCCLXXXII., Nos Nicolaus sacri archicoenobii Montis Casini humilis Abbas et monachorum conventus Curatoribus designatis natali recolendo sancti Francisci Asisinatis salutem in Domino. Quae in sanctum Benedictum Parentem nostrum flagrantissimae pietatis indicia legatione et muneribus obtulistis nobis, Casini recolentibus eiusdem fundatoris nostri saeculare festum, manent alta mente reposita. Hinc, pari gaudio vobis gestientibus in Domino diemque laetitiae agentibus ob sancti Francisci concivis vestri natalis saecularem commemorationem, non possumus quin ad vos magno charitatis impetu abripiamur, gratulanter quidquid boni sit quidquid sancti Vobis auspicantes. Quamce lubenter hanc nacti sumus occasionem civitatem vestram consalutandi, quae illustrium virorum foecunda Parens, artium monumentis praeclara nulli caeterarum Italiae civitatum impar assurgit. Quod vero seraphici Francisci mater et altrix extiterit, omnibus antecellit ; nam huius sanctitatis sideris adeo splendore perfunditur, ut regio quodam decore per universum orbem redimita refulgeat. Maiores vestri semper Benedictinos alumnos hospitio et multis urbanitatis officiis per asisinates fines sunt prosecuti : idcirco mirum non est a nobis maxime exoptari ut hodie in vestrum spirituale contubernium non velut hospites et advenae sed sicut cives et domestici excipiamur. Nec profecto vos latet quanta charitatis necessitudine seraphico beati Francisci sodalitio devinciamur. Nam is a caelesti patrefamilias operarius conductus in vineam suam, Ordinis sui fundamenta iacturus, *Portiunculam* illam adeptus est, quam sanctus Benedictus primo mane uti operarius conductus in sudore vultus sui iam excoluerat. Ibi primum evangelicae paupertatis magni illius Archimandritae Francisci studio semen cecidit, et attulit fructum multum in patientia ; ibi granum sinapis familiae suae crevit in arborem magnam ; ibi sub umbra illius, quam desideraverat, sedit Mater Ecclesia, quia fructus eius erant dulces gutturi eius ; ibi ipsa per sex saecula perfugium in tribulatione, levamen in adversis invenit ; ibi, uti iam Pontifici Maximo Innocentio visu innotuit, conlabentem Basilicam Lateranensem a sancto Francisco pietatis ac doctrinae fulcro servatam laetabunda conspexit. Nec deinceps hoc benedictinum in seraphicum Ordinem studium elanguit ; nam adhuc eo suis in incunabulis vagiente, abbas et monachi Casinenses de eiusdem propagatione et firmitate soliciti ad radices Montis Casini primam eorum domum in hisce meridianis Italiae finibus aere abbatiae excitaverunt. Quapropter indubium est, quin recolentibus nobis in terris omnigena honorum ratione et maximo sancti spiritus gaudio saecularem natalis

sancti Francisci, hic mirificus paupertatis cultor et Beatus Benedictus exultent in gloria, in triumphantis Ecclesiae cubilibus in Domino laetentur, et propensiori affectu aurem cordis ad preces nostras inclinent. Una sit igituro, elevatio manuum nostrarum, idemque in oratione nostra ignis exardescat, cum uno in discrimine universa versentur religiosa sodalitia ; ut ossa, quae erant arida, reviviscant, et quae adhuc virescunt magis floreant. Quoniam vero in Christo capite nos eiusdem membra laetamur et ingemiscimus, in eius sponsam matremque nostram Ecclesiam charitas Christi magis urgeat nos, dum fluctibus pene obruta iactatur in mari : adsint adsint illa duo sanctitatis luminaria magna, Benedictus et Franciscus, oratores apud Dominum, ut aliquando stet spiritus procellae et sileant fluctus eius. Haec, quae imo pectore gerimus, vobis significanda curavimus hisce literis, ut amoris et observantiae nostrae in vos indicium aliquod praesentes moneat et posteros ne fugiat.

Datum in Archicoenobio Montis Casini, xv. Kal. octobris.

Sigillum Casinensis Monasterii.

E.

Identification of the Body of St Carlomann.[1]

In Dei Nomine, Amen. Die vicesima octava Maii millesimo septincentesimo trigesimo secundo, in Sacro Monasterio Montis Casini. A richiesta a noi fatta per parte dell' Illm̃o e Rm̃o P. D. Stefano di Stefano da Napoli Abbate del Sagro Monastero di Monte Casino ed Ordinario della Diocesi e Giurisdizione Casinense ci siamo conferiti nel detto Sagro Monastero, dove gionti ave detto Illm̃o P. Abbate asserito alla nostra presenza, e di moltissime altre persone, qualmente sapendo benissimo trovarsi sotto l' Altare Maggiore della Cattedrale Chiesa del suddetto Sagro Monastero, tra gli altri corpi Santi quello di S. Carlomanno Re e Monaco ivi da molti secoli siccome ci ha detto costare dal sermone, che fe' il dotto Pietro Diacono nell' Ottava del P. S. Benedetto, da publici istromenti, uno rogato nell' anno 1486 a di dieciotto Novembre da Notar Cristoforo Perono da S. Germano e l' altro rogato nel 1628 a di primo Ottobre da Notar Tiberio Pollicelli da S. Vittore Notaio Apostolico, e da altri Protonotari e Notari Apostolici e Regii, e dall' originale processo fatto per ordine del suo Predecessore Abbate ed Ordinario della Diocesi Casinense P. D. Simplicio Cafarelli nelli anni 1627 e 1628, nel tempo che fu

[1] We think we are affording pleasure to the reader by reproducing, for the first time, the juridical act of the identification of the body of Carlomann, drawn up at the beginning of the last century, and found near the tombs of St Benedict and those of his first successors, Constantine and Simplicius and of Pope Victor III., a proof of the certainty that existed regarding the presence of St Benedict's body.

ritrovato e riconosciuto il corpo di questo Glorioso Santo Carlmanno e di altri Santi che erano sotto il suddetto Altare maggiore, quali sermone, istromenti e processo ci ha asserito conservarsi nel celeberrimo Archivio Casinense, alle quali Scritture ecc, e ci ha soggiunto, che da molto tempo aveva pensato di levarlo da detto Luogo e riponerlo in una Cappella di detta Catedrale Chiesa eretta ad onore del sudetto Santo ; che però fè giorni addietro precorrere per la Città di S. Germano e Terre dello Stato, ed altri convicini Luoghi la Notizia della solenne Traslazione di detto Corpo Santo, che fare intendeva questa mattina vent' otto del corrente Maggio, invitando gli R.R. Sig.ri Capitolari dell' Insigne Collegiata di S. Germano, e delle altre Terre della Diocesi, ecclesiastici, Galantuomini, e persone tutte ad intervenirvi, e ci ha richiesti farne l' atto publico *ad futuram Rei memoriam.* Per tanto col presente publico istromento facciamo sapere a tutti, e sia ad essi noto, come questa mattina vent' otto maggio verso le ore dodeci, il predetto Illmo e Rmo P. Abbate D. Stefano vestito con Cappa magna e Cappello Abbatiale accompagnato da Rmi Monaci del sudetto Sagro Monastero, e dal R. Capitolo dell' Insigne Collegiata di S. Germano e dalli altri Ecclesiastici della Diocesi Casinense, vestiti con cotta, beretta ed almuzia respective, e da Noi D. Gaetano Tarsia Canonico della già detta Collegiata di S. Germano Notaro Apostolico, e Giudice Ordinario descritto nell' Archivio della Corte Romana, Carmine Carlino della sudetta Città di S. Germano e Regio Giudice a' Contratti, Alessandro Rotondi da Castro cielo Palazzuolo publico e Regio Notaro, e Testimoni infrascritti, è stato dalle sue camere condotto alla porta della chiesa Catedrale di detto Sagro Monastero ed ivi li è stato levato il cappello Abbaziale dal P. D. Marino Migliarese da Puzzuoli Decano e primo Maestro di Ceremonie, e consegnatali la beretta li è stato dato l' aspersorio dal P. Priore Claustrale D. Clemente Albrizio da Napoli, e con il detto aspersorio ha data l' acqua santa a se stesso, ed a tutti gli altri circostanti, e poi si è condotto avanti La Cappella del SSmo Sagramento, e doppo d' aver ivi fatta orazione si è condotto nella Sagrestia assieme con li Rmi Monaci che si dovevano vestire di abiti sagri, ed in essa Sagrestia ha ritrovati li Rmi P. D. Tiberio Gentile da Genova Abbate di S. Maria d' Andria, e Visitatore delle Provincie Napolitana e Romana e P. D. Idelfonso dal Verme da Napoli Abbate di S. Michele Arcangelo di Monte Scaglioso, quali due Rmi sono stati vestiti di abiti sagri dalle Dignità Diaconali, dalle quali gli è stata posta anco la mitra in testa, ed il sudetto Illmo P. Abbate D. Stefano è stato vestito di abiti sagri dal P. D. Angelo Longo da Napoli Decano e Lettore di Sagra Teologia e dal P. D. Giustino Capece da Napoli Collaterali, e dal medesimo Li è stata posta la mitra e datoli il pastorale, ed incaminatasi la processione per andare sopra il Santuario precedeva il secondo Maestro delle ceremonie P. D. Flavio della Marra da Sessa con li ceroferarii, poi gli Novizii con cotte, quali dovevano servire per la mitra pastorale, in appresso le Dignità Diaconali quali sono state D. Giuseppe

Maria Macardi da Herii, D. Massimo Ruggi da Salerno, D. Petronace Mastrilli da Nola, e D. Vittore da Ponto di Amalfi ; Successivamente le Dignità Presbiterali, quali sono state D. Gio. Battista Mormile da Napoli, D. Eugenio Condulmieri da Venezia, D. Ottavio Ruggi da Salerno, e D. Rinaldo Luigi Magassoli da Bergamo, e poi seguivano le Dignità Canonicali quali sono state li P. P. Decani D. Antonino Falangola da Sorrento, D. Francesco e D. Stefano Maria Capobianco da Benevento, e D. Faustino Parisi da Cosenza ; appresso veniva il Prete Assistente P. D. Giuseppe Maria Franchini da Padova Decano, e poi i due P. P. Priori D. Clemente Albrizio e P. D. Antonio Capece da Napoli Priore d' Andria, e doppo di essi i sudetti Rm̃i P. P. Abbati Gentile e dal Verme con La mitra in testa, in ultimo L' Illm̃o P. Abbate D. Stefano con la mitra e pastorale in mezzo alli sudetti Collaterali, e giunti nel Santuario è stata levata la mitra a tutti li sudetti Illm̃i e Rm̃i P. P. Abbati e si sono inginocchiati con tutti gli altri avanti l' Altare mag., ed hanno fatta orazione, poi si sono tutti alzati col segno del Primo Maestro delle Ceremonie e si sono portati l'Illm̃o P. Abbate con mitra e pastorale sotto del Baldachino gli altri due Rm̃i Abbati e li due Priori alli quattro scabelli nel mezzo del Santuario, il Prete Assistente nel suo luogo nel scabello, e gli altri nelli loro scanni posti al solito vicino la balaustrata del Santuario, sedendo gli R. R. Sig Capitolari della Collegiata di S. Germano vestiti con cotta ed almuzia respective, e tutti gli altri Preti nelli scanni posti nel piano della Chiesa vicino gli Pilastri, e vi era ancora grandissima moltitudine di Popolo. Fu ordinato dal sre d° Illm̃o al P. D. Errico della Marra da Sessa Vicario della Sagrestia che facesse levare la pradella di legno che sta sopra gli gradini dell' Altare mag^re., ed aprisse la portella che sta sotto alla sud^a. pradella, siccome ave fatto pigliando la chiave e facendo levare la sudetta pradella, il sudetto P. D. Errico è calato nella grotticella, che sta sotto il sudetto Altare mag^e. e con esso lui ha condotto Nicolo Agostino Perales da Gaeta Maestro Fabricatore e Domenico Polino da S. Elia Scarpellino, quali alla presenza nostra e de sottoscritti testimonii, che dalla parte di dietro del sudetto Altare stavamo riguardando dalle aperture di quelli pezzi di marmo che sono posti in guisa d' una stella, e per essere tra di loro larghi per le sudette aperture molto ben vedevamo quello si faceva sotto il sudetto Altare nella grotticella, hanno sfabricata una tavoletta di marmo, quale stava fabricata, e ben attacata con grappe di ferro al muro sotto il medesimo Altare in cornu Epistolae sopra della quale stavano incise queste lettere "*Sanctus Carolomannus Rex, et Monachus Casinen.*" Levata detta tavoletta di marmo vi si è trovata una cassetta di piombo quale stava in una piccola nicchia è stata presa dal detto P. D. Errico vestito con cotta e stola, ed è stata poi dal medesimo consegnata al P. D. Andrea de Palma da Napoli Decano, e Vicario Generale Casinense, e da questo consegnata al sudetto Illm̃o, dal quale è stata posta sopra dell' Altare, si è osservata dal detto Illm̃o P. Abbate, da Noi, dalli Sig· Arciprete D. Emmanuele Galasso Dottore dell' una e dell' altra

legge, Esaminatore e Giudice Sinodale quale per lo spazio di trentacinque in trentasei anni è stato Consultore della Corte Spirituale Casinense, dal D. D. Giuseppe Abb. Ruvo da Terlizi, Consultore della detta Spiritual Corte, dal D. D. Livio Roccosenso Archidiacono della sudetta chiesa di S. Germano ed Esaminatore Sinodale, e da D. Cosimo Biondi D^re. e primicerio della sudetta chiesa ed Esaminatore Sinodale, D. Cosimo Atella, D^re. Canonico, e Lettore della Prebenda Teologale, dal D^e. Filippo Mortaroli Governadore di S. Germano, dalli Sig^i Medici D. Cesare Cinque da Napoli, Bertario di Armando, Giovan Pietro Tarsia di S. Germano e Benedetto de Vendictis di S. Ambrogio esservi sipra le seguenti lettere di piombo "*Corpus S. Carolomanni Regis et Monachi.*" Alzato dalla cassetta sudetta il coverchio dal sudetto Illm̃o si è trovata dentro un' altra cassetta parimente di piombo con l' iscrizione sopra "*Corpus S. Carolomanni*" con lettere di piombo sopra poste e levato da questa seconda Cassetta il coverchio vi sono state trovate le ossa di detto glorioso S. Carlomanno con quantità di esse ridotte in cere (*sic*) costituenti quasi l' intiero corpo, come il tutto è stato veduto ed osservato dal sudetto Illm̃o e da Rm̃i Monaci con avere Io D. Gaetano vestito con cotta, almuzia, e stola portata la sudetta cassetta di piombo, nella quale stavano le sudette ossa, in giro per farle vedere a tutti gli Apparati e Secolari e che vennero sopra del Santuario per maggior loro soddisfazione, e da Noi predetto Notaro, e Testimonii, e sono state riconosciute dalli sudetti Sig. Fisici Cesare Cinque, Giovan Pietro Tarsia, Bertario Armando, e Benedetto de Vendictis, e dalli Sig^i. Arceprete Archidiacono, Primicerio, Lettor Teologale, e da tutti gli altri detti di sopra ; doppo di che esso Illm̃o ave pigliato da la detta Cassetta un pezzo di Cranio di detto Santo Corpo Santo Corpo (*sic*) con una notabile portione dell' osso del femore seu coscia col suo capo, che si articola al cossendice, o vero osso ischio come hanno riferito et attestato li sudetti Sig^i. D^re. Fisici, ed ave questi riposti in una cassetta coperta di velluto cremesi ornata con pezzilli di argento di puntae di Spagna, ed al di dentro foderata di raso bianco di Fiorenza con pezzilli di argento della med^a. qualità adattandoveli bene dentro della bombace, e poi chiusa l' ha ligata con fettuccia di seta di color bianco in modo di croce imprimendovi sopra in cera rossa di Spagna il suo proprio sugello in più luoghi, il tutto coll' assistenza dell' detto primo Maestro di Ceremonie ecc., quale ave consegnata al Mto R. Sig^o D. Andrea Schoemberg Cappellano Intimo di Sua Altezza Rm̃a il Sig^o. Principe, e Monsig Abbate di Fulda, venuto apposta per recevere la sudetta sagra Reliquia col permesso Apostolico della felice memoria di Clemente XI. mediante suo breve, *datum Romae apud Sanctam Mariam maiorem sub anulo Piscatoris die* 30 *Julii* 1719 *Pontificatus sui anno decimonono*, e portarla a detto Sig^o. Principe e Monsig^o. Abbate con l' attestato fatto dal sudetto Illm̃o P. Abbate dell' identità e verità delle sud^e. Sagre Reliquie per essere stato il sudetto Santo Fondatore del celeberrimo Monastero di Fulda, ed ave ancora da

quella estratte dell' altre particelle di dette sagre ossa per donarle ad altri Monasterii insigni, ed un pezzo per ponerla nel Reliquiario di questo Sagro Monastero. Ciò fatto, levando il detto Illmo tutte le sagre ossa, e ceneri dalla detta cassetta, ave quelle riposte dentro d' una tovaglia di seta di color bianca, quale ave poi racchiusa dentro d' una cassetta d' argento fatta fare a tale effetto di lunghezza palmo uno, e oncie nove, e minuti due, e di larghezza onze otto e mezzo, e profonda oncie sei, e mezza coll' iscrizione sopra : "*Corpus S. Carolomanni Regis, et Monachi.*" Et in nostra presenza chiusa, apponendovi sopra i quattro lati quattro piccoli chiodi d' argento fatti a vita, e posta sopra detto Altare è calato al piano del Santuario, e fatta prima la genuflessione ave incensato dette Sagre Reliquie. Doppo detta cassetta d' argento dove sono state riposte le sud^e. sagre reliquie è stata posta sopra del Feretro adorno con panni di seta, e coperta con cotra nobile. Indi in lode del sudetto S. Carlomanno è stata recitata un orazione panegirica del P. D. Sebastiano Maria Campitelli da Trani, ed il suo tema è stato questo : "Et oculus Dei respexit illum in bono, et erexit eum ab humilitate ipsius, et exaltavit caput ejus et mirati sunt in illo multi et honoraverunt Deum." (*Ecclesiastico*, Capo xi. vers. 13), quale compita si è alzato l' Illmo P. Abbate con la mitra, e preso il pastorale si è portato in mezzo del Santuario, dove genuflesso con tutti gli altri Rmi Abbati, ed apparati e tutto il popolo, ha fatta orazione per un pezzetto, e poi ave posto l' incenso nell' incenziere coll' assistenza del Prete assistente, e preso l' incenziere ave incenzato il santo corpo : Ciò finito si è intonata l' antifona *Similabo eum, etc.*, dalli P. P. Cantori, e detto il versetto *Amavit, etc.*, con la riposta di tutti si è alzato detto Illmo con dire l' orazione assistito da Collaterali, Prete Assistente, e chierico di Bugia, e poi si è inginocchiato di nuovo si è dato principio alla processione precedente la Croce portata da D. Domenico Favilla da Napoli in mezzo de Ceroferarii, ed in appresso tutti gli Ecclesiastici, che vi erano intervenuti, Capitolo della Chiesa di San Germano, Rmi Monaci vestiti con le Cocolle e gli Parati de sagri abiti tutti con cerei accesi in mano. La detta Bara veniva portata sulle spalle dalli sudetti Rmi P. P. Abbati Gentile, e dal Verme, e P. P. Priori Albritio e Capece sotto il pallio le di cui aste si reggevano da sei Galantuomini di San Germano, ed appresso andava detto Illmo P. Abbate vestito pontificalmente con pastorale in mano in mezzo de Collaterali seguito da moltissime persone nobili, e Civili di detta Città, e Terre convicine, e numeroso popolo accorso, cantandosi le litanie de Santi. La processione ha principiato dall' Altare mag^e. ed ha girato uscendo per la porta di essa Catedrale Chiesa, vicino il capitolo, ed ha girato per il chiostro, ed è uscita per la porta del Refettorio, ha fatto il giro della colonnata, che sta nel cortile avanti detta Catedrale cantandosi sempre le litanie, e replicando in dette litanie molte volte il nome de S. Carlomanno, ed è entrata per la porta mag^e. di detta Catedrale : In entrare il corpo del Santo si è fermata la litania, e si è intonato da Cantori il *Te Deum, etc.*, e la pro-

cessione ha fatto il suo camino, si è fermata avanti la Cappella del Glorioso S. Carlomanno, sopra del di cui Altare si è posta la sudetta Cassetta di Reliquie, e terminato il *Te Deum* si è intonata doppo l' antifona *Similabo, etc.*, con la sua orazione, e mentre si cantava detta antifona si è incensato di nuovo detto santo corpo. Poi intonato ave il *Sit nomen Domini benedictum*, et in fine ha data la benedizione al popolo. Ha presa la detta Cassetta d' argento dove erano riposte le sud^e^ sagre Reliquie, e l' ha posta dentro una nuova cassa di piombo di lunghezza palmi due, e onza mezza, di larghezza onze nove e profonda onze otto e mezza, quale era da un lato aperta, ed è stata poi chiusa con una lamina parimente di piombo, che è stata saldata da Mr̃o Silvestro Gallozzi alla presenza di esso Illm̃o P. Abbate, e Rm̃i P. P. Abbati, Priori, e Monaci, e di Noi Notari e Testimonii sopra la quale cascia di piombo vi è la presente iscrizione. "*D. O. M. Sancti Karolomanni Pipini Fratris ex Austrasiae Rege Casinesis Monachi Corpus ab ara maiori ubi actis saeculis conditum, anno MDCXXVIII. repertum ad hoc proprium Sacellum clausum argentea theca transferri solemni pompa curavit Stephanus IV. Abbas Casini die XXVIII. Maii anno Domini MDCCXXXII.*" E questa riposta dentro una cassa di legno di cipresso di lunghezza palmi due e oncie due, di larghezza onze undeci e mezza, e profonda oncie undeci è stata riposta dentro un altra cascia di legno di quercia di lunghezza palmi due e mezzo, di larghezza palmo uno, e oncie tre e mezzo, e di profondità palmo uno, e oncie tre e mezzo, quale cascia stava posta sotto l' altare di detta Cappella, e sopra detta cascia di quercia si è posta una lapide di marmo di lunghezza palmi due, e oncie otto e mezza, e di larghezza palmo uno, e oncie sette e mezza, coll' iscrizione sopra "*Corpus S. Carlomanni Regis*" e sopra detta lapide vi si è posta l' urna similmente di marmo lunga palmi due, larga onze tredeci, e di altezza palmo uno e mezzo, fabricata di dietro, e postovi alcune grappe di ferro, accio non si possa cavare dalla fenestrella, che sta nel paliotto, nella quale fenestrella vi sta una cancellata d' ottone. Il che fatto da esso Illm̃o P. Abbate e Rm̃i Monaci, Capitolari, e Populo si sono adorate dette sagre Reliquie, e dal Prete Assistente sono state publicate l' indulgenze concedute dal detto Illm̃o a tutti quelli, che vi sono stati presenti. In tutta questa funzione si è osservato tutto quello che comanda il Sagro Concilio di Trento, le Costituzioni Apostoliche e Sagri Canoni intorno a queste recognizioni de corpi Santi, e Traslazioni in altre Cappelle. In tutta questa funzione vi è stato presente L' Illm̃o e Rm̃o Monsig. D. Pier Maria Guistiniani Vescovo di Sagona Professo di questo Sagro Monastero, quale vi si trovava da molti giorni avanti. E poi processionalmente detto Illm̃o se n' è ritornato nella Sagrestia dove è stato spogliato de sagri abiti, e vestito con cappa magna e cappello, è stato recondotto alle sue stanze dalli Rm̃i Monaci, Dignità, Canonici, e Semi-Canonici, e da tutto l' altro Clero. Super quibus, *etc.* Actum uti supra sub dicta die vicesima octava Maii 1732, Indictione decima : Pontificatus Sm̃i Dn̄i Nr̄i.

in Xp̄to Pris, et Dôm̃i D. Clementis Divina Providentia Papae XII. anno eius secundo, Praesentibus V. I. D^re. Philippo Mortaroli ab Arpino Gubernatore Civitatis S. Germani, V. I. D^re. Josepho Grimaldi, Dño Philippo Aceti, Dño Hieronymo Riccardi, D^re. Germano Tarsia, D^re. Simeone Tarsia, Dño Angelo Gizzi, D. Jacobo Maria Nacci, et Clerico Gregorio Patini Testibus ad praedicta habitis vocatis, et rogatis, *etc.* Et Ego D. Caietanus Tarsia Civitatis S. Germani Canonicus Insignis Collegiatae, S. Germani Publicus Apostolica Auctoritate Notarius Judex Ordinarius in Archivo Romanae Curiae descriptus de praemissis rogatus praesens instrumentum feci, scripsi, subscripsi et publicavi, meoque solito signo signavi requisitus.

Idem D. Caietanus Can^u Tarsia Notarius qui supra manu propria.

Segno del Tabellionato.

D. C. T.

F.

Of the Translation of the Arm of St Benedict from the Church of Brescia to the Cassinese Church of St Faustinus.

Die 22 Junii 1646.

Convocato et congregato Consilio speciali civitatis Brixiae more et loco solitis, mandato, *etc.* In presentia autem perill^mi. et Excell^mi. D. Hieronymi Bucchiae Vicarii et Locumtenentis Ill^mi. et Exe^mi. D. Georgii Contareno Praetoris (cioè Podestà) pro infra scriptis peragendis, in quo aderant.

D. Horatius Longhena Abbas (*era il titolo che si dava al capo della municipalità che durava in carica soli due mesi*).

D. Franciscus Lana Advocatus (*era il 2° e il suo officio era di combattere tutte le cose proposte da farsi*).

D. Franciscus De Capitaneis,
Pompeius Chizzola,
Achilles Madius,
} Deputati ad observantiam Statutorum.

D. Hieron^s. Trussius et Ludovicus de Aste—Sindici (*cui spettava assistere ai contratti, alle cause ed all' ammin. dei beni*).

Antiani: Nicolaus a Fide—Achilles Pontoleus—Jo^s. Paulus de Federicis a Curte—Scipio Brognolus—Silvius Stella—Jo^s. Bapt^e. Luciagus—Jo^s. Paulus Glerola et Antonius Savoldas Additus, cum tractetur de electione Oratorum.

In ipso Consilio lecta fuit Pars de elevando conditionem appositam circa renitentes in Parte Consilii Generalis 17 Martii 1645, Oblationis Serenis^mo. Ducatorum quinquaginta mille, cuius Partis tenor est, videlicet :

Per occasione della presente perfida invasione Turchesca—ommesso—Lecta fuit alia pars deliberandi super instantia Rev^mi. Patris Abbatis D. Horatii Barbisonii, de transferendo Brachium S. Benedicti existens in Cathedrali ad Ecclesiam SS. Faustini et Jovitae collocandum in Altari, quod per dictum Rev^mum. Abbatem ibi propriis expensis construitur, cuius Partis principium est, *etc.*

Condiscendendo questa città al generoso talento del nostro concittadino il Rev^mo. P. Abbate Don Orazio Barbisoni, *etc.*

Demum assumptum fuit scrutinium pro eligendis duobus oratoribus ad eundum ad confinia obviam Exc^mo. D^o. Paulo Donato armorum Cõmissario in Terraferma et inter nominatos electi remanserunt: Comes Fr^s. Martinengus Caesarescus et Caesar Martinengus.

(Dai documenti *A* e *D.*)

Die 23 Junii 1646.

Convocato et Congregato Consilio Generali Magnificae civitatis Brixiae more et loco solitis de mandato, *etc.* In presentia Illustrissimorum et Excellentissimorum D. D. Georgii Contareno Praetoris et Joannis Aloysii Praefecti (*dicevasi Capitano Vice Podestà, e attendeva alle milizie e alle cause criminali*), *etc. etc.* Rectorum pro infrascriptis peragendis. Aderant Consiliarii, 162, videlicet.

D. Horatius Longhena Abbas—D. Franciscus Lana Advocatus.

D. Franc^s. de Capitaneis—Pompeius Chizzola—Achilles Madius—Dept^ti. ad observ^am. Statutorum.

D. Hieronymus Trussius et Ludovicus Astus—Sindici (*I nomi dei consiglieri non furono trascritti*).

In primis (*si omette la trattazione sul togliere la condizione di cui sopra*, ecc). Postea per ipsum D. Abbatem proposita fuit alia Pars, transferendi ab Ecclesia maiori Sanctissimam Reliquiam Brachii S^ti. Benedicti ad Ecclesiam Sanctorum Faustini et Jovitae collocandam in Altari quod construitur propriis expensis per Rev^um. Abbatem D. Horatium Barbisonum iuxta instantiam, cuius Partis tenor est.

Condiscendendo questa città al generoso talento del nostro concittadino il Rev^mo. P. Abbate D. Horatio Barbisoni, che ha risoluto a sue proprie spese edificare una solennissima Cappella et Altare di fini marmi e nobile artificio construtto, dedicato al glorioso Patriarca S. Benedetto fondatore del Sacro Ordine dei Monaci Cassinensi nell' insigne Tempio nostro, dove giacciono le sacratissime ossa delli gloriosi Martiri Santi Faustino e Giovita Prottetori e Tutelari della città di Brescia:

Arricordando per cio quanto degna et honorifica cosa sarebbe che la Venerabile Reliquia d'un intiero braccio di S. Benedetto propria di questa Città, anticamente concambiata con un braccio di S. Faustino Prottetore, che ore viene adorato nella Chiesa di essi R. R^mi. Monaci a Monte Cassino presso il rimanente intiero corpo di esso S^to. Benedetto, qual nostra

Reliquia resta (per cosi dire) quasi occultata alla pia venerazione de' fedeli, benchè riposta con altre Reliquie della Città proprie, nella Cattedrale fosse con gloriosa memoria trasportata da tale incognito loco, et riposta con magnificenza nel predetto Altare di S. Benedetto in deposito nobilissimo che intende fabbricare a fine che di continuo restasse da pie e divote persone venerato quel sacro pegno, come in suo proprio e naturale loco e Chiesa, il che sarebbe senza un minimo pregiudizio della Città nostra, et come nel Memoriale di esso Rev^mo. Abbate presentato alli Deputati nostri, e Consulta hora letto in questo Consiglio. Perciò l' andarà Parte in gratificazione di esso benemerito Abbate et Venerabil Monastero, che sia detta sacra Reliquia di S. Benedetto dalla Chiesa Maggiore dove si trova, trasportata decorosamente alla Chiesa de' Ss. Faustino e Giovita, e collocata nell' Altare o Cappella che intende fabbricare detto Rev^mo Abbate Barbisoni, finita che sia l'opera, et ivi in loco sicuro e cospicuo posta perchè con maggior pietà e divotione sia da fedeli adorata. Con conditione però inalterabile, non altrimente, che resti detta santissima Reliquia come si trova, in libero dominio, continuato possesso, et assoluta dispositione della città nostra, come è di presente, e che siano *perpetuis temporibus* tenute le chiave del deposito, dove sarà posta dalli Sindici nostri che *pro tempore* saranno, ben conservate nella Cancelleria di questa Città, fatta prima una breve inscritione del fatto in pietra nella Cappella medesima come sarà ordinato dalli Deputati nostri Pubblici et alle Chiese, nè possa mai esser aperto esso deposito, o levato detto santo braccio se non colla presenza di uno de' Sindici, et uno almeno di essi Deputati alle Chiese. Dovendo pur anco ad ogni arbitrio della città nelle sue occorrenze, massime quando si levano le santissime croci d'oro e fiamma et del Campo, detta Reliquia esser dalli detti R. R. Monaci levata di là et portata alla Chiesa maggiore per esser processionalmente portata dal R^do. Clero, conforme al solito, e dopo l' ultima processione dalli medesimi R.R^di. Padri esser reportata alla Chiesa di S. Faustino e posta in detto Altare, dove star debba finchè parerà a questo Consiglio. Non potendo mai esser in alcun tempo da detto Rev^do. Abbate, Monasterio, e successori allegata ragione, attione, o prescrittione immemorabile sopra essa Reliquia, ma resti et s' intenda sempre ivi in deposito come cosa propria della città nostra, et ad arbitrio removibile. La spesa della traslatione sia fatta dal d^o. Rev^mo. Abbate come offerisce e non dalla Città.

Quae Pars contradicta per D. Advocatum Consilii, capta fuit de suffragiis centum triginta quatuor affirmativis, et viginti octo negativis.

(Documenti *A*, *E*.)

Tenor avtem Svpplicationis, de qva svpra, sequitvr.

Ill^mi. SS^ri. Proñi Col^mi.

La rissolutione, alla quale dai stimoli della devotione è stato portato il

P. Abbate D. Horatio Barbisoni di fabricar' un' Altare nella sua Chiesa de Ss. Faustino et Jovita di marmi et struttura nobile e di spesa considerabile ad honore del Santissimo Padre Benedetto ha destato un cosi infocato desiderio nei petti del medesimo Abbate e suoi Monaci di poter adorare nella medesima Chiesa il S^mo. braccio del sud^to. loro Patriarcha, del quale quest' Illustrissima Città si trova Padrona, ad effetto che si come nella Chiesa di Monte Cassino appresso il corpo del medesimo gloriosissimo Patriarca si adora il braccio dell' invittissimo Martire S. Faustino, così in questa appresso li sacratissimi corpi de' Santi Faustino e Giovita resti venerato quello del Padre Santo Benedetto, che innamorati di così degna vicenda, violentati da così pio incentivo, et affidati nel impareggiabil benignità delle Signorie loro Illustris^me. ardiscono di humilmente supplicarle a concedergliene il deposito nel sud^o. Altare con quelle forme che saranno stimate più propie et convenienti, assicurandole che la custodia sarà accompagnata co'l più possibile decoro, e con fedeltà intierissima e quei Padri nel commodo maggiore dei più espressi e più frequenti loro Voti verso il santissimo legislatore, e Monarca dei Monaci non mancaranno di supplicarlo ad essere incessante Intercessore appresso la Divina Maestà per la felicità e grandezza di questa Patria, e di tutte le Signorie loro Illustrissime. Quas Deus, ecc.

Adì 9 Giugno 1646.

La mattina fu presentata la sud^a. instanza di supplicatione per li RR^mi. SS^ri. Horatio Barbisoni et (Angelo) Andreis Abbati agl' Illustris^mi. SS^ri. Deputati Pubblici sedenti li quali inclinando alla concessione, mentre però così piaccia all' Illustris. General Consiglio, e con le Capitolationi et Ordini, che doveranno esser stabiliti, hanno commessa la nota di essa presentatione et il Registro per ogni miglior modo, *etc.*[1]

Deinde assumpto scrutinio pro Supracomite ad Triremem per Fraleas et Artes armandam electus, *etc.*, *omissis.*

Deliberazione in seguito alla petizione presentata la mattina 9 Giugno d^o. per li RR^mi. (resto come sopra).

Augustinus Stella Magnificae Civitatis Brixiae Cancellarius ss^t. et sigillavit.

Nos Georgius Contareno pro Serenis^mo. Ducali Dominio Venetiarum Potestas Brixiae attestamur dictum D. Augustinum Stellam esse talem qualem se subscripsit cuius, *etc.* In quorum, *etc.* Brixiae die 17 Julii 1646—Christophorus Pinettus Cancellariae Praetoriae Notarius—(Dai Documenti *A. D. E.*).

Adì 24 Luglio 1649.

Gl' Illustriss^mi. Sig^ri. Deputati Pubblici infrascritti sedenti, *etc.* Volendo eseguire la deliberatione del Generale Consiglio 23 Giugno 1646, intorno

[1] Decreta della città di Brescia per la traslazione del Braccio del S. P. N. Benedetto.

la Traslatione del Santissimo Braccio del Gran Patriarca S. Benedetto dalla Cattedrale dove giace, alla Chiesa dei Ss^m^ Prottetori Faustino e Giovita mart^i.^ ridotto dal Rev^mo.^ Padre Abbate Barbisoni, a cui contemplatione segui la concessione, a perfettione con ricca e nobilissima struttura l' Altare in cui dovrà detta santis^ma.^ Reliquia esser depositata sempre sotto la custodia, e Padronanza giusta la Parte sud^ta.,^ e memoria in pietra, *etc., etc.*

Hanno stabilito e prefisso il tempo del sud^to.^ trasporto, alla Sinodo comandata da Monsig^r.^ Illustris^mo.^ e Rev^mo.^ nostro Vescovo per il Settembre prossimo, acciò dal concorso di si numeroso Clero, accresciuto l' Ordine de' Padri Cassinensi che dovran essere avvisati della Terminatione presente, come anco altri Claustrali e Chieresie, la Fontione riesca più decorosa e riguardevole secondo la dignità di si Pretioso Pegno.

Lodovico Lupatino Abbate,
Horatio Longhena Advocatus,
Ercole Carenzoni Deputato,
Camillo Palazzi Deputato,
Francesco Rodengo Sindico.

Aurelius a Curte Civitatis Brixiae Cancellarius. (Dai Documenti *B. E.*)

ADÌ 11 LUGLIO 1682.

Inventario fatto d' ordine et alla presenza dell' Illustris^mo.^ Sig^r.^ Ottavio Borgondio Governatore della Compagnia delle SS^me.^ Croci oro fiamma e campo, scritto da me Cancelliere infrascritto.

Nel Vestarìo alto, nel luogo laterale alla Cappella delle SS^me.^ Croci :

Un Tribunal d' argento che serve nell' esposiz^ne.^ delle SS. Croci.

Una croce di ramo adorato col Labaro, che serve per le processioni della Compagnia.

Nel Vestarìo dietro l' Altare sotto le SS. Croci :

Un Tabernacolo piccolo d' argento, dentro diverse S^te.^ Reliquie.

Un braccio d' argento, dentro reliquia di S^to.^ Costanzo.

Un braccio d' argento, simile di S^to.^ Benedetto.

Un braccio d' argento, entro reliquia di S^to.^ Anatolone.

Un braccio d' argento, ut s^a.^ di S^to.^ Apollonio.

Un Ostensorio d' argento di diverse Reliquie di Santi.

Uno altro piccolo d' argento.

Un altro d' ottone d' un deto di S. Maria Maddalena.

Pastorale di S. Filastrio.

Le chiave de' quali Vestarj sono state consignate al S^r.^ Ventura Caffi Tesoriere della sud^a.^ Compagnìa per la custodia.

Appresso al qual Caffi s' attrova pure un Baldachino di Broccato con ricami e franze d' oro, con le sue Coltre et Mazze 16.

Item, la Crocetta con capi d' oro maccitio con scatola dorata per uso dell' Ill^mo.^ Governatore nelle processioni.

Io Ventura Caffi Cassiere c. s., *omissis* (Dal Libro c. s. *C.*).

Documento per la Reliquia di S. Placido M. da Monte Cassino, con un cenno per la storia del Braccio di S. Benedetto in seguito alla sud[a].

Dal Registro *E* come sopra a pag. 92 e seguenti.

In Christi Nomine. Amen. Anno a Nativitate eiusdem millesimo sexcentesimo quinquagesimo secundo, Indictione quinta, die vero undecima mensis Novembris, Pontificatus autem SS[mi.] in Christo Patris et D.D. Innocentii divina provvidentia Papae decimi, anno eius octavo. Presenti pubblico instrumento omnibus notum sit qualiter usque de anno 1641, ad instantiam Rev Patris q[m.] D. Horatii Barbisoni Abbatis Congregationis Casinensis, recognitae et approbatae fuerunt per Illustris[mum.] et Rev[um.] D. Georgium Serinam Vicarium Generalem Episcopatus Brixiae nonnullae sacrae reliquiae ex corporibus Ss. Virginum et Martyrum Anastasiae, Coronae et aliarum *etc.* quae sacrae reliquiae idem R[us.] P. D. Horatius obtinuerat dono a Rev[mo.] P. D. Placido a Perusia Abbate Casin. Monasterii S. Petri eiusdem civitatis ; Item recognita et approbata fuit pars unius cranii et unius maxillae, sive mandibulae superioris cum duobus dentibus et tribus molaribus ex corporibus Ss. Placidi et Sociorum martyrum Monachorum Ordinis S[ti.] Benedicti, quae reliquiae donatae fuerunt praedicto Rev[mo.] P. D. Horatio Barbisoni Abbati, *etc.*, a Rev[mo.] P. D. Flaminio a Messana S. Placidi de Calonero dictae Urbis et eiusdem Congregationis Abbate, *etc.*, prout de utraque donatione et recognitione diffuse constat instrumento per me Notarium infrascriptum confecto et rogato sub die 15 Novembris 1641, cui, *etc.*, ex quo etiam constat, dictas sacras reliquias fuisse procuratas a praedicto Rev[mo.] P. Barbisoni ad effectum illas donandi Ecclesiae Parochiali terrae Offlaghae territorii Brixiensis Dioecesis, *etc.* (*dove questa famiglia Barbisoni avea la villeggiatura e la maggior parte dei beni e dove aveva special affetto avendo molto beneficato sì la Chiesa Parr[e.] che il Santuario della B. V. della Formica*).

De anno autem 1651, Rev[mes.] P. D. Angelus de Andreis de Desenzando Abbas Monasterii S. Faustini Brixiae, volens adimplere intentionem praefati Rev[mi.] P. D. Horatii iam demortui circa dispositionem dictarum sacrarum reliquiarum, *etc.*, illas dedit tradidit ac donavit dictae Ecclesiae Parochiali Offlaghae, excepta tamen supra memorata parte maxillae S. Placidi et Soc., *etc.*, quam penes se retinuit, *etc.*, habito prius assensu Adm. R[di.] D. P. Dusii Rectoris dictae Parochialis et Nobilium ac homimum dictae terrae, attento etiam quod dictus Rev[mus.] P. q[m.] D[ns.] Horatius, ut asseruit idem Rev[mus.] P. D. Angelus, paulo ante eius mortem, dictam sacram partem mandibulae, libere et gratiose eidem donavit, ac concessit ad effectum illam collocandi in dicta eius Ecclesia S. Faustini Brixiae ac alibi prout sibi placuisset, *etc.*, nunc autem attenta concessione reliquiae praefatae, *etc.* Cupiens Rev[mus.] P. D. Angelus qui supra, pro maiori ipsius reliquiae autenticatione, iterum illam recognosci ad effectum postea disponendi de illa ad sui libitum, *etc.* Presens et personaliter constitutus

coram Perillustri, et Adm. Rev^do. D. Paulo Calino Praeposito Ecclesiae S Agathae Brixiae, uti a perill^ri. et Rev^mo. D^no. Vicario Generali Episcopali, *etc.*, specialiter delegato, presentavit quamdam capsulam rotundam panno serico rubeo co-opertam, alligatam, ac sigilli Monasterii S^t. Faustini praefati super cera hispanica impressione munitam : asserens esse eandem capsulam in qua reposita fuit ipsamet Sacra Reliquia videlicet pars mandibulae S. Placidi et Soc., *etc.*, tempore eius primae recognitionis et approbationis factae a Perillustri et Rev^mo. D^o. Vicario Generali ut supra usque de anno 1641 prout ex praecitato instrumento per me Notarium infrascriptum rogato apparet, *etc.*, petens et instans dictam capsulam considerari, aperiri, ac praedictam occlusam reliquiam examinari et quatenus narrata per ipsum, cum dicto instrumento in omnibus et per omnia concordare compertum fuerit dictam sacram partem mandibulae esse eandem, quae a praefato Rev^mo. D^o. Vicario Generali pro vera Reliquia S. Placidi et Soc. approbata fuit ac propterea dignam, quae publicae venerationi ad liberam dispositionem et arbitrium dicti Rev P. D. Angeli Abbatis, *etc.*, tam in Ecclesia S. Faustini Brixiae, quam alibi exponi possit, declarari, *etc.* Qui Perillustris et Adm. R. D. Praepositum delegatum, *etc.*, intellecta instantia et petitione dicti Rev^mi. P. D. Angeli, dictam capsulam (inspecto prius sigillo desuper eam posito ac impresso), aperiri mandavit, et in ea reperta fuit dicta pars sacrae maxillae, omnino illesae nec ulla in parte vitiatae neque suspectae, *etc.*, compertoque in omnibus et per omnia ipsam cum Instrumento suae primae recognitionis optime concordare ; auctoritate sibi tributa, dictam, sacram mandibulae partem esse eandem quae a Rev^mo. D. Vicario Generali supradicto approbata fuit, proptereaque dignam quae publicae veneratione tam in praefata Ecclesia S. Faustini quam alibi ad libitum dicti Rev^mi. P. D. Angeli exponi possit, declaravit omni, *etc.*

Acta fuerunt haec Brixiae in Camera Abbatiali praedicti Rev^mi. P. D. Angelis Abbatis, *etc.*, praesentibus Adm. R. P. D. Georgio Feroldo a Brixia Monacho Casinensi, Joanne Perugino q^m. Comini laico congregationis Oratorii, et D. Carolo de Vsanciis q^m. Bartholomaei familiari praedicti D. Delegati, omnibus testibus, *etc.*, super quibus petitum fuit a me Notario infrascripto hoc publicum conficere Instrumentum.

Ego Presbiter Franciscus Genarnis Publicus Apostolica auctoritate et Curiae Episcopalis Brixiae Notarius de praemissis rogatus hoc publicum Instrumentum confeci, scripsi, ac in fidem me subscripsi apposito sigillo Episcopali.—Adì 5 Ottobre 1653.

A perpetua memoria dei Posteri si fa noto, come la sud^ta. santa Reliquia di S. Placido e Compagni fu riposta nel Tabernacoletto di Pietra all' Altare del Padre S. Benedetto nella nostra Chiesa de Ss^ti. Faustino e Giovita nel luogo del braccio del medesimo nostro SS^m Patriarcha, che doveva la città di Brescia dare in deposito, non avendo il Monasterio dal Settembre 1649, in quā mai visto la risoluzione di mantenere il sud^to. deposito, benchè concesso con Parte del General Conseglio, et

determinato di darlo con decreta dell' Illust^ma. Banca—Onde per non stare in più lunga dimora, et credendo i Padri questa essere disposizione divina, sono venuti alla suddetta resolutione l' anno e giorno sud^to. correndo appunto la festa de' Gloriosi Martiri S. Placido e Compagni. .

Io Antonio Salvadore del fu Francesco Lodrini da Brescia Archivista Municipale della medes^a. città ho fedelmente trascritto in 14 paginette dai Volumi sopraindicati i documenti suddetti.

Brescia, 30 Novembre 1878.

(*Da una lettera del P. D. Giuseppe Quandel all' Abate di Montecassino.*)

. . . Siamo . . . andati dal detto Arcip. Vescovo, che cortesemente ci ha accompagnati alla Cappella delle Reliquie e si è trovata l' urna indicata dal Lodrini nel modo da lui descritta. Abbiamo portato la detta urna, e tolti i suggelli l' abbiamo aperta, e nell' involto di carta, su cui stava scritto *S^ti. Benedictis Abbatis*, sonosi rinvenute le due ossa del braccio, ma non la cartolina co' frammenti. Si sono opposti a darmi tutte e due le ossa, anzi il Segretario voleva darmi solo metà dell' avambraccio ; ma Monsig. Arciprete ha acconsentito di darmelo intiero, rimanendo ad essi il braccio che era un poco più grosso e più lungo. È stato messo in uno scatolino e domani andrò a prenderlo insieme coll' autentica. Le altre dichiarazioni si manderanno per posta non trovandosi a Brescia le persone che possono darne le precise notizie. Siamo poi tornati da Monsignore, che non ha trovata nessuna difficoltà.

Il reliquiario fu venduto con altri ad un canonico della fabriceria a nome *Noi* se ho ben compreso, ma avendo Zanardelli fatto asservazione che non era regolare che l' avesse acquistato un membro della fabriceria e per un prezzo insignificante, allora furono tutti gli oggetti fusi e venduti a peso di argento ad un tale Fugini o Fagini. Il detto canonico, buon uomo, ma ignorante, lo fece in tempo che l' arcipretura era vacante e ne ottenne l' autorizzazione dal Prefetto, per investirne il prezzo in certi bisogni della Chiesa. . . .

Brescia, 13 Ottobre 1878.

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